

3-1-2007

Court Green: Dossier: Political Poetry

Columbia College Chicago

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Columbia College Chicago, "Court Green: Dossier: Political Poetry" (2007). *Court Green*. 4.
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court green⁴

Dossier: Political Poetry



\$10 USA/\$13 Canada



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Court Green is
published annually at
Columbia College Chicago

Court Green

Editors: Arielle Greenberg, Tony Trigilio, and David Trinidad

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Court Green is published annually in association with the English Department of Columbia College Chicago. Our thanks to Ken Daley, Chair of the English Department; Dominic Pacyga, Interim Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Steven Kapelke, Provost; and Dr. Warrick Carter, President of Columbia College Chicago.

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Submissions for poetry are encouraged. Our submission period is March 1-June 30 of each year. Please send no more than five pages of poetry. We will respond by August 31. Each issue features a dossier on a particular theme; a call for work for the dossier for *Court Green 5* is at the back of this issue. Submissions should be sent to the editors at *Court Green*, Columbia College Chicago, English Department, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. Work received outside of this submission period will not be read; work without a SASE will not be returned; manuscripts with insufficient postage on SASEs will not be returned. Single issues are available for \$10.

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ISSN 1548-5242.

Magazine design by Kevin Riordan, Columbia College Chicago Creative & Printing Services.

Printed in the U.S.A.

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Poems

David Kresh

Windows

It turns out
a great idea (born
sideways of irritable
impulse) to clean the windows.

The fog has blown off.
I've ragged the tawny rivulets
away like breaking winter.
Things jump forward.

Now I air and water my own
drifted skin. I comb out my
long wet hair and cut
all my twenty nails.

Now let spring spring
at the windows sharp
as broken glass or the edges
of geranium petals from across the street.

Let's say no more
than that for now.
I'm thinking again about the
social utility and moral standing
of art. Maybe it doesn't
keep me honest, but at least
it keeps me worried.

Judith Kroll

In the Glen

You said "I'm nearly fifty, and still find it hard to accept
there are no perfect choices."

"And the residue of imperfect choices is karma," I said.

"I like getting high with you," you said, "and talking."
I counted three.

Your hand
caressed my thigh—

I gazed at the green-gold moss,

a glittering bead-fringe swung from trees
bent over the stream down here on the floor of the valley.

The thought of your pulsing body made me smile.
But I respected it.

How is it I had no fear? There would be no rape,
no landslide; the flood
would swallow some other thwarted and promising life.

I dreamed so deeply being in this place,
four years ago, with five good friends,
that I was almost there.

Now three have left India,
one lives in an ashram outside of Bombay;
my husband's in Delhi, but we are estranged.

Estranged! And water drips from this rock-face like music.

"Time is just a convention, a grid"—
as you reached out across it,

your hand
a wave of light sealed in an amber river.

"I want to get back to my baby," I said,
and I did.

Judith Taylor

When Last She Gazed Out Her Casement Window

Sometimes she has been irritated with her thing.

Some days she is a poet wearing a pink bra.

Some days she *is* a pink bra.

Imprisoned in a tangled tower of words,
locks too short for a prince (!) to grab on to,
shorn on purpose. She supposes she's perverse.

Pop quiz: Describe one act/thought of a life's moment.

She cooks, therefore she eats.

She eats, therefore (grumpily) she cooks.

Or, she pays a large bill (action) and she feels terrible!

Don't hate the body just because it's graspable.

Consciousness pulling the whole cartload along.
Sprightly pony.

James Grinwis

Sound Cloud

Small elephant. Green hued
witch of the sea. In the land
of wacky email, the snails
drift like chunks of styrofoam.
Music professor. Academy
of 'I got something you don't
got'. Academy of the fist-sized
bruise. In the beer commercial,
I was a man in the background
drinking just to drink. Staring down
my own throat. Crocodile throat,
the crocodilian hide of the cult
of images. Collectibles. I go deeper
in my shoes, listening. Bach, Mingus,
an earbox, soundscapes
full of blood. Gee.

*

The students have all gone home.
The campus is like a huge white carcass.
I walk my dog across it.
The eerie silence is leopardish.
The wide-throated pedestrian thoroughfares
ring with nothing. Music professor
at empty bus stop. Land of
migrating owls and their midnight
drinks. I am not a professor
or a teaching assistant. I just happen to live
nearby.

*

She clings to the glass ceiling.
There are wren-men, snakes
and mule-snakes. I have no snail-shell earrings,
someone said. Beyond
the summing up.
Past the thing to get through.
Anna walked into the vestibule
where a shade dried her out.
A hand full of rheumatism
crawls around like a lopped off squid.
Somebody's name or a mason jar

with a hornet inside.
He leans against the railing smoking
a reed pipe looking out
at the tundra, a peculiar state
of anybody's soul.
The body is whole.

Catherine Theis

Pilgrim

Casual and lonely, these hills are just decadent.
Spring greens, soiled linen, border decoration gold.
I remember a blond boy traversing himself
obscene. His empire, once desired, desisted
as wildly expectant footfall and cry, pestiferous bore.
My concern is with circumference, many faceted
crystal wine glasses, Roman aqueducts, all sorts
of highway thinking. Rain during the night.
Five inches through the darkened skyclose.
I will move to hold your hand.
Weeks may pass, then years. The opportunity
may come when we are not alone, but do not fault
the voluminous open, where any one thing can swing
with the wind. Be observed, you too move
with the principle in mind. There is always
something to be done, and you do it
in this case by repeating the visit several times.

Maggie Smith

Let's Not Have a Meeting

Let's not have a meeting
on how to have more effective meetings.
Somewhere it is just turning to summer.
Clouds click into place and begin
the business of raining. It's that precise.
Then the birch is a violin. Then the light
above the kitchen sink is a beehive.
There are too many sounds.
Let's not have a meeting to name them.
I'm busy making a life. It could be the wrong life.
Then all of the work will have been for nothing.
You shouldn't have driven. There is no breathalyzer
for sadness. Somewhere it is already summer,
and ivy has claimed half the houses. Here it is fall,
and my tree is the only one on the street
still with leaves. You shouldn't have.

Susie Timmons

Arson

I moved from my old neighborhood to Wrigleyville. Nothing
very good ever happened to me down there. Now I'm living on the corner of
Bosworth and
Waveland where I hope my life will improve. My first night, last night, there
was a terrible
fire just around the corner on Ashland Avenue. A business.
a wooden frame house with an adjacent brick garage
Korean body shop

I couldn't sleep. I took a bath
I went back to bed, but soon there were sirens
sirens screaming
and not going away, and then the campfire smell
Got up, put on some clothes
went downstairs
I came around the corner
there were at least 20 fire engines
and Ashland blocked off.

Billows of dense black smoke piled out of the building. The building
was crackling as it burned. frantic. urgent.
The tar tiles on the side of the building
were melting buckling oozing

High up, two firemen sat astride the beam of the steeply pitched roof
as if though riding a great burning horse, using their axes as whips.

chopping holes in the slopes of the roof. They would inch forward and chop another hole.

and flames flickered escaping outward.

I kept going closer and closer until I could feel the heat from the fire warming my face

one of the firemen told me to move back, and I said

it's an instinct, I just feel drawn to it. He said, I know. but you have to move back, you could get hurt

but the fire was so warm and alive, a hot crazy animal.

A man from the busy bee boarding company made a pass. Then a guy with a CFD baseball cap and a bag of raisins passed and asked me, "enjoying the barbecue?"

A fire can be quite a scene.

A coil of heavy black smoke was winding and sinking over my building.

This morning large crispy curls of charred tarpaper covered my new street all up and down the block.

I wonder about the body shop owners, if they were insured, how they got the dough or experience to start such a business. Where will they go, what will they do?

I went walking by

this morning. first checked the alley,

apple tree in blossom with black charcoal trunk.

gutted.

spoke with a man, the owner of the building

He said it was arson. I asked who was suspected and he said the upstairs tenants, some "hillbillies".

I asked because, after I took that bath last night, I
stared down out the window onto my new corner. A couple of
tough looking guys pulled up in an old Pontiac, parked in front of my car. They
took a bunch of big square cans from
the back seat. All the while, both looking around furtively. Then one of
the guys looked up, and they both stared at me watching them, from my new
home on the third floor
wrapped in a
geranium-red bath towel.
I never told anyone but you.

Sick of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania, the state of
not calling, not writing.

behind every piney mountain a coal mine

Don't go down that road, it'll make you cry

Truly this is God's country,
but only on one side.

I've went to Jersey Shore, and it wasn't what I thought it would be.

The enforced state of letting go

—the aggravating complexities of this irritating Pennsylvania world,
our life,
seem most like.

Larry Sawyer

Kentucky

You are coatless Kentucky
You are drunk and disorderly
Your lawns however are immaculate
Your women are chatty, horny
You don't pick up the check
You're the home of Johnny Depp
You are peppered with horses
Your eyes are barbeque pits
and I'm ok with that.

P. Scott Cunningham

Sonnet Against *Walk The Line* (2005)

I met Cash in Delaware, carried his
and June's luggage to the car just five years
before they died, and beneath the surface
wrought by disease, the young man was clearly
visible, the brash motel wrecker who
hated everyone, who saw the bottom
and brought it back with him, turned life into
some kind of gorgeous Miltonian poem
wherein the Devil falls upwards to find
himself in a Frank Borzage film, run-
ning up love's symbolic stairs. There's no mind
that, once made, can be divided or un-
done, nor voice made less deep by the mocking
of directors, actors, scripts and blocking.

Gregory Crosby

Immortality

Russ Meyer (1922-2004)

Without the valley, the hills, cupped &
Straining against the horizon, would be
Nowhere, man. There would be nothing
To echo chrome throats, throttled. Varla's
Sneer. The sound and solid effect of Mr.
Bone meeting Karate Chop.

Between the curving slopes, vision
Cleaves to itself. Lucky man who knows
What he likes: a take-charge voice wrapped
In leather, stacked. Through mascara
Masks, vixens affix their hi-beams on the
Prey. We're all of us down in the mud,

Honey, but some are looking at the
Drive-in stars. *Don't put me in some museum.*
My films are ever-living. They'll go on and on.
They aren't ever going to die. Skin flickers.
Beyond the valley, the vale. Slower, now,
Pussycat. Sleep. Sleep.

Lesley Jenike

Trouble in River City

Music man, no one wants your trumpet.
This place is all silence

all the time. We're crouching in the ear
of a great shell, the wind blowing through, not you.

We like our prehistoric sea as is.
We love our provisions: If

this one is a dark one then this is a light one, is
a lighter one. The difference is obvious.

See how the sun seems to come striking
the cheekbones of our best and brightest,

river a mirror marking
the line between what we are

and what we see? You want to make trouble
but we do no longer.

All the couches have stopped burning
in the houses that have stopped burning

and from the conch's chamber
we are reborn the color

of a mute at the end of a trombone,
or downtown after six: gone and

gone and gone, one shadow passing
frantically over the ghetto.

In this silence we can hear our breathing
which is beautiful and frightening. Listen,

we don't want you. Your songs break the radio
broadcast drowning us all in their heavy rain.

You want trouble?
We'll bury you

in your own vice: a suit jacket, single note
caught in your teeth. Then you'll see quiet

is best. Quiet can cure
the headache, backache, cockache. Stop

the music in all its verisimilitude, O
the useless guitar, useless

beat! We know reality. It comes in
wearing black, wearing white, wearing

for a costume the delicate inner ear,
God howling electric through

bones until
the hammer.

Robert McDonald

Dear November,

What the dusk needs is just one swan;

become a veil of bridal edges. Land, won't you, and marry
the water. Each plot a garden, each bird a blossom

on the dark bare branch.

Caroline Walker

House of Cards

/the night my father called
to say something didn't feel right
a guy in Berlin broke the record for the highest number
of stories built in a house of cards/
one hundred and thirty/
one/
this was a hundred and seventy nine years
after the sperm whale/went back to ram the *Essex* a second time/
different knives for different cuttings as the size of the net
depends on the size of the catch/
a knife repeatedly scraped along the length of the body/loosens
the scales/
lower the sails/in a storm/the water is too deep
you can only tread for so long/the secret to a good dive/
is to line up the shoulders with the hips/
to survive/first remove all signs of the human
the head/hands/feet/
hidden in the fist of your mate/
is the length of your turn/
bailing out the boat/
/the knife must be sharpened each time

rats/my father pleaded/I can hear them
scratching at the mattress/
I looked under his bed/as he had done/when I was a child/afraid
of trolls/there/s nothing there
I can hear them/
scratching/their way in/
I swabbed his swollen tongue with a wet sponge/
I held his penis/into the plastic urinal/
his water had gone black/
I counted breaths/drips of morphine under the tongue/
more/he wanted/more/the lifeboats were already too full/
they had to beat them back/with the oars/
to keep them from climbing in
my father didn't swim very well/
once/when I was pushed into the deep end of a pool/
he called out to strangers to help/
I paddled like a dog/taking too much chlorine in
later/vomited on the porch/
couldn't you have made it to the bathroom/
he said/damn it

I flushed the toilet/rinsed out the urinal with Clorox/
with about a week left/I went to pick out the urn/
among the options/blue glass with a dolphin handle
one of the urns played Mozart/
by winding up a key in back/
I chose the least tacky/a simple walnut box/
they took credit/
/I signed all the paperwork/
I was on duty every other night/which meant
his wife could sleep in the other room/
in the bed where they had made love for twenty years/
and shut the door to the hum
of the oxygen machine/

to be regarded as infinite/
a set must allow pair after pair to be pulled away
and still remain full/
hidden in the attic/were stashes of food/
found after his death/
parts of the brain may erode/while others are oblivious
to how far the boat has drifted/
a leaking boat/or only a raft/too heavy with passengers
or a plank from a sinking ship/or an inflatable life jacket/
or too few to go around and the feet treading/
until they are too tired/
/the abyss
empties/until it yields its salty bottom/
in low tide/a track of scars
we repaired the leaks in the boat/
shut the curtains/ate takeout in the next room/
he could hear the forks and knives scrape across his mother/s china plates/
I held his hand/as I turned on the water
and waited for the room/
to fill/

washing up on shore/was the third whale boat/
carrying four skeletons/
/in death by dehydration/the last day and hours/are mute
except for a bare whispering/they were blind/by then
but could hear the boat lap against the waves/
/I put my father in the boat without oars/
two hours past/April Fools/Day
a thousand miles away/
the survivors were found clutching the bones/of the shortest lot/

Gray

A nurse offers me my rotten gray tonsils
in a glass jar. Would you like to keep them?
Finally caught on a back road in Louisiana,
agents hit Bonnie and Clyde's gray Ford with
167 rounds, 50 hitting their targets. The fingers
on Bonnie's right hand had been shot away. Evil Knievel
broke thirty-five bones. I try to swallow a stale
communion cracker. In the end, Capone succumbed
to syphilis. His mind was like a glass of water
slowly poured out onto a summer sidewalk. It is a sin
to take communion if you are not baptized.
The damned are buried face down so their eyes
will be turned from God. Churchill looked the wrong way,
crossing the street in New York. Ann Boleyn wore white
to her beheading. Mary Queen of Scots wore red. Found inside
Bonnie and Clyde's car: 14 guns, 3000 rounds of ammunition,
license plates from 8 states and a saxophone. Eventually,
Evil confessed, I lost my nerve to jump.

Security Coffins

Officials readied 25,000 body bags.
I crossed out your entry in my address book.
Survivors try to collect spilled light with a dustpan
and a broom. Barbed wire comes in giant bales.
Unroll to fit the size of your personal prison.
How convenient, a drive-by viewing window
at the funeral home. It was the month
when magnolias begin to wilt in the heat.
All the windows nailed shut, the room filling
with rain. Leaves circling the flowers turn brown
and curl like a cupped hand scooping candy from a jar.
You will be buried with a string tied to your index finger.
If you wake up, ring the bell dangling above you.
I will dig all night.

Brenda Coultas

from A Lonely Cemetery

The 4th of July

On the 4th of July, a poet told me this story, which takes place over some months. He runs his family's 250-year-old plus bar in the French Quarter of New Orleans and the haunting became active when he changed it from a biker bar and hotel into a single family dwelling and a gathering place for artists and poets. The upstairs apartment has about 10 rooms with 20-foot-high ceilings and shuttered windows. He theorizes that the spirits came from the emotions of the previous tenants who were lonely or battling personal demons in the old single room apartments.

Some of the spirits are charming, for example, when I visited the bar, the spot near the top of the ceiling where one familiar spirit sometimes appears, was pointed out; at first glance, this ghost looks like a haze of cigarette smoke hanging in the air, but as one keeps looking at the smoke the image, a woman dressed in white, becomes clear.

However, the subject of this story is a malignant spirit. After they moved in, his wife begins feeling someone scratch her as she walked up the stairs. The scratching increased in intensity and regularity until one day it drew blood, and the entity began sitting in a corner of their bedroom at night and entering their dreams. Dave asked a friend, a hoodoo practitioner, how to vanquish the spirit. The friend warned him not to give in to the entity's manipulations. He

warned, "You have to think of them as pests." He told Dave to call upon his ancestors and to ask them to walk through the space and help him claim it. He did, but things got worse. He began to battle the entity in his dreams. One night at about 4 am, he awakens and knows that it is in the bar, and he walks down for the confrontation. At first he sees a jester (a human spirit), and it runs behind the bar and through a wall. He's relieved, thinks that was easy. Then he sees the other one further back by the bathrooms. It was huge and made of garbage, like something you see next to an incinerator. This was not human he said, this is the one that has been tormenting him. He began a showdown, Dave told him that only one of them could stay and it would be him. Dave realized his enemy's weakness that this entity could not stand the thought *of not existing*. It would feed off of anything and do anything in order to be. He held his ground even though the entity threatened to harm the people Dave loved. The spirit struggled, threatened, and then fled through the wall. He has not seen it since.

Sister-in-Law's Paranormal Encounters

The telephone business is troubling. She was getting divorced so her emotions were running high. An angry male ghost might have been drawn to a troubled female? She was living alone in a 50-year-old farmhouse on the West side of town, and she had not yet had her daughter.

She stepped outside to wait for her friend to pick her up, but the friend was late so she went back in. She heard the sound the phone makes when a receiver is off the hook. It was. Which was odd, for she clearly remembered hanging the phone up properly before she went outside. She put it back on and the friend called again and said, "Why are you playing games with me? I know it was you because I hear the same background music." During this time, her family's police dog never stirred or barked.

Later on that night, she was asleep and awakened by the sound of cats fighting in the back yard. She got up to check because she had an outdoor cat. She looked outside, no cats. She returned to bed, and as she was about to fall asleep something woke her. Standing at the foot of her bed was the ghost of a man in a plaid shirt and blue jeans with his hands on his hips. He was headless and there for less than a minute. She thought she might have been dreaming but her socks were wet and grass-stained.

This was not the first encounter. When she was a little girl, her family moved into a farmhouse in the country, and they gave her an upstairs bedroom. In the middle of the night, she woke up and

screamed. Later in this same house, her father went out of town; she and her mother were in bed. They heard a crashing sound, her mother got out of bed to see what it was. In the hallway a picture had crashed to the floor. There were three pictures hanging in the hallway. As they stood there, the second one crashed, then the third one.

In another farmhouse later on, in the basement there was a door that sealed off the unfinished part and behind it was dirt. Nothing ever happened there. No one could have hidden there, yet they never turned their backs on it.

Later my sister-in-law wrote: "The house, with the headless guy, was a farmhouse. It was about 50 years old at the time. . . . Still in town, but houses were not so close together. There was a door in the kitchen that went into the basement. It was more of a cellar than a basement. I didn't go down there much. There was also a door in the kitchen that went upstairs. I continued to live in the house for a few more months. The attic was half finished. There was a bedroom and the other half was just attic storage. I had a friend who lived in the upstairs bedroom for a couple of months when my ex was still there. She said she heard noises from the attic portion a few times, but she wasn't scared. She figured it was a mouse. She got the cold air in the shower a few times too. I got it almost every day."

My Brother's Tale

My brother knows everything that happens in the county because he has an outdoor job that begins before dawn. He says the meth houses are the ones that have the lights on all night because anything you start on meth you keep doing for days until you crash, whether it's sex or cleaning. One guy took his TV apart and could never put it back together. Some people get "meth-bugs," which is when the chemicals in the meth start to seep out of the skin, making the meth-head scratch and claw open her or his skin. He even knew a guy who froze his balls off. The guy went out with some friends to steal anhydrous ammonia, a frozen gas the local farmers use for fertilizer and a major ingredient in meth. It's so malleable you can put it into any kind of container, so he put some into a paper cup, sat it between his legs, and drove off. The anhydrous ammonia spilled onto his balls and froze them off, and his friends kicked him out of the truck as they drove by the Emergency Room.

I did not find many ghost tales, but crystal meth labs growing in the cornfields. I found that some members of the county road crew are swingers. I heard of one farmer who wife swaps.

The Haunted Jail

I asked my cousin for some ghost stories so he took me to a haunted jailhouse. The jailhouse is now owned by a law firm, and there is only one remaining cell, which has been preserved. It's a four-story 19th century building with stone façade and turrets. Underneath is a tunnel that connects the jail to the courthouse across the street and some people have seen apparitions in the basement by the tunnel doors. At the rear of the jail is a view of the courthouse with a statue of The Liberty with her face turned away, which the lawyer found tragic because this was the last sight of the free world the prisoners saw. Although I took many digital pictures, none of them contained orbs or ectoplasm. I felt no creepiness, not even when I lay down on a steel bunk in the jail cell.

The odd thing was, my cousin, a master of tales, could not remember any ghost stories and remembered only one UFO encounter near the Yankeetown river bottoms. There was a ball of light, which he and another cousin followed in their car, until it sank into the river and which made my other cousin cry.

My cousin was well known for his tales of sensuality; every woman he ever dated was "a stone cold fox." In Tennessee, he was invited to an orgy by two stone cold foxes in a bar, and everything was going pretty well until some guy eyed him, so he left and had no idea where he was. The next day when he hadn't shown up for work, his father went searching and found him wandering by the highway and all my cousin could say was, "You won't believe it."

Jo McDougall

The One Horse Store

Gray as cypress,
flung beside a dirt road
like seed,
it offered tobacco, beer, overalls,
its one door open
to the heat.

My girlfriend and I,
fifteen and summer bored,
walked there every day
for Cokes and Little Debbies.
We courted the stares of men
old enough to be our fathers,
moving to Hank Williams lonesome on the radio,

then sauntered home
to the wrath of our mothers,
hoping to God we smelled of booze and cigarettes.

Sheila E. Murphy

Let's Go Wash the Chevrolet

I declare from someone else's heart that you are in alignment with my gravity. So let us scamper to the dance tunes. Let's inject utility into our stream of consciousness, condone the apoplectic restoration of the dimestore pulse of this young feather of a townlet. Let's enjoy projected selves. Let's divvy up the ruckus, pass the buck. Let's go wash the Chevrolet, get in and watch the life sized-plus folks stretched across the billboard-cubed sized screen be members of the master plot and grin through fate as fat and frame by frame go whelming past the well-planned nightlights.

Elaine Equi

Unisex Colognes

AVATAR

There's one in each of us.

A barefoot prince
by a shoeless river.

GRASSHOPPER

Many varieties: veldt, pampas,
crab, Kentucky Blue, and more.

BLACK FOREST

Breezy. Bold.
Brooding. Bavarian.

Makes anytime
feel like the middle of the night.

Jibade-Khalil Huffman

“When delivering make-up . . .”

When delivering make-up
for the neighborhood watch association's
second annual fundraiser
for our statues restoration
I imagine I am the guidance counselor
on television's Degrassi High. Every
colored one naming Jamal
in the advice I've given
instrumental to the parent's
own wish of first a doctor
then nearly as well
to leave the house
just because

your family has seen you naked once
does not mean they want to see
you naked again on the occasion
of Dr. King's birth
which was
this year the day
we handed over the packages.
My life's work concerns revealing
celebrities enabled
secret lines of the guides demise
to truth telling of the last
and last letter
in which Star Jones talks about
her man her
wedding the rumors
and the lies.

The Blowjob Pictures

If that's what you look like
when you cum
I have exaggerated
the effort involved

in modeling clothes
at the broadcast
of the surface of the moon
your mother as I remember
in the drive-in
with her eyes bugged out
at the reunion
there is no way

out of their subdivision
except following
the truck towing our car
when we get out of this
I will die at the last part
in the street, or

in bed with the radio
for some reason, dialing the radio
in the middle of the film

they all strip down
to their underwear
in the nightclub, going bazookas

in a scrimmage with
the doorman and the owner
in the parking lot
at a reading of
the castration notice, when
I am backstage where
everyone is getting blowjobs and
everyone else is taking pictures.

Nate Pritts

New Year's Eve

It's six o'clock in the evening & where I am
there is no snow. Birds transcribe the incalculable

arc of flight, that graceful half-circle etched
between origin & destination. Who can say
where they'll end up? My first name is Nate.

My last name is Pritts. I'm having a wonderful time.
It's been a wonderful year. But even the birds

can't resist taking shots at each other,
thumb-sized beaks aimed kamikaze-style, feathers
shining the gaudy colors of jealousy, avian lust

& rage. My name is Nate & my neighbors
are unknown to me—their names unrecorded,

their haircuts unremarked upon, their all-night-long
comings & goings unexplained, the snap-
crackle-pop of their car tires on the rough gravel

as they back out & pull in with carloads of who-knows-what?
My last name is Pritts. Sluggish winter dark

makes it so I can't see more than ten feet
in front of my face, no moon. My name is Nate
but I will answer to Nathan & after this

last night of the year you can call me The Birdman
for the tenuous but lasting peace I will broker

amongst the warring factions of our feathered friends—
all night we will sing about love & happiness,
our wings our wings our wings around each other.

Mike White

Dream in House Buying Time

Like having a new red Christmas bike
it matters where the property
line is drawn. A dressed man says
try this on for size
and he takes my bike for a long ride.
He rides ferociously and sticks out
a red tongue. I stand on
the chalk-drawn-on sidewalk
all night with a stopwatch. Interest rates
are rising. A neighbor has carved
a percentage in a pumpkin. Good friendly
people. Good schools. The man
doesn't exactly come back.

Forest Fire

Foundry the size of a small country.
Locust-thick smoke drifting
into the cities. Time
to get biblical. Time
to join the fanatics. No watering
or unreflective toilet flushing
for a full week. Pity the mansions
in Forest Hill Acres. Who will
drive the ambassadors
to the airport? And where
is our mayor? Running
down Main Street handing
out pamphlets. What to Do
in a Forest Fire. We hardly see
the forest for the flaming trees.
Oh but how the sunsets are something
this time of year.

I Got Frank O'Hara'd

just eating a sandwich
minding my own
and thinking damn
the whole city
has a brand new car
honking go all the while
in yellow hard hats
the former Puerto
Rican movie stars
were ransacking my pockets
and reading my love letters
with silver flashing teeth
each to each

Brian Kloppenberg

Crank

The smell of something burning—
I'm almost sure it's not my apartment,
maybe the meth-heads downstairs.
Not even our butch super braves
their swings from disco mania
to comatose silence, but they don't
deserve all the blame: a fax from France,
not another all-night orgy, woke us
at four a.m. Irritation, elation—
I *can* communicate in French,
no matter what those Parisians said.
But look at this list of correspondents
I've forgotten. Oh, to disappear
into the lives of others.

Barely sweating,
I turn on the air-conditioner. Spring
should last more than two days,
and I won't face summer, not yet.
How about a replay of April '92,
ambling through the West Village
as the fat sun fell toward Jersey: red
bricks, mellow in the light, everyone
gorgeous. My boss, another macho
Latino, schooled me in the protocols
of cruising—I never quite nailed the turn-
around. Now I concern myself with trees,
those that thrive, that fail. Sometimes I wish
for rows and rows of linden, ash, oak
on every street of this island.
Don't get me wrong: I'd rather breathe
analytical cubism than fresh air.
It's just that—how can I say this—
the final cadences are coming
and we could use the leaves.

Mary DeNardo

It's a family room

He has to hose his car down. The breeze has left dust, sand and a leaf. Nothing happens for a moment and nothing changes. She gives him the hose. She won't date a Navy pilot. A slow, careful sentence with detail. Still, they make the most out of it; the hose and breeze and some jam. Someone makes pancakes. The light happens. The leaf changes. She has jam in her teeth from the pancake. They watch the planes turn over in the sky. This is their blue line.

It's a family room. It's a wash. Three baseballs at the front door. It's a convertible. Once a field, now a park, really a beach. They all sleep in the room on the beach. He says, *All I hear is the wind*. She says, *Okay*. Is this tranquility? Everything is flexed; kids on shoulders, the grace of mid-air, the roll of the plane or pasta on the floor. A collection of by-ways and turn-offs. It's a convertible. Leaves strung from a mobile. She said, *That was flat land*.

How would you walk through this? On a ridge, at the same time, what it can be, what it also is. In the sound of the water the car is clean. Everyone takes a pilot. Everyone in the couch. She has a desire to win. Kids on her shoulder, here or there. He takes streamers to the landing. Above the home but still in the home and floating. He says, *For crying out loud*. She says, *This is mid-air*.

Claudia Carlson

Straw Mother

I stuffed your head with crumpled anthologies,
fortified your legs with pipecleaners
and for a heart, I filled a box with taxi receipts.
Where would you be without eyes—
those bird-cage mirrors that twist & turn?
I stuck cigarettes onto twigs
and lit them on the ends of your arms.
Lips? Can't see them under the paste
holding your teeth in place.
Don't ask what I had to roll and pinch
to get your body straight. *Straight?* As if.
I taped the little-black-dress to your flammable back.
But this isn't right, you never wore a slip
torn from the news. Or dress, or sling-back shoes
on your narrow footnotes.
Folded your dissertation into origami trousers
sharp enough to crease the silence.
Almost done. What haven't I done?

Elizabeth Savage

The Husband on the Table

He knew more
than cooking

 jazz
 B-list movie actors
and the years they died
 but he didn't say—

 so we lived
every night
 in the kitchen

 the radio played
 I read and waited
 he stirred or
 listened

 Starved I married
spent I slipped
 from a fool
 for beauty

he fed me well
 and often his share

never sparing a word

Susie Lived in My House As a Girl (and knows about the trees)

The rows of Norway Spruce—
 Mr. Wise's natural fence
for forty years
 he planted, planned

his Christmas trees
in a tangled band

 —the blessed shade of
atheist pines
 sows

a neighborly forgetfulness
 of property lines

 and I inherit
their soft bows smoothing
 the ruptured earth

a rooty nuisance
 this stretch of mirth

Jennifer Willoughby

We Seek a Shepherd or a Sign

The religion of spring is simple—
how to fix the wicker, where to spread the birdseed.

A wedding we attend
features a never-ending blessing.
Friends assemble. Friends depart.

There is the blessing
of the big white dress and the unbuttoned tux.
The blessing of the fish and the last snatched minute
of lust under the coats. Finished by gin and frosting,
we pass out cigarettes and hooray our way home.

You tell me in the fever dreams of geeks everything burns.
I tell you the neighbors are saving up for a baby.
A bidding war erupts over the milk while the mice
hire each other to build cathedrals in the kitchen.
There is nothing special about renting.

Your neck is wide open.
You whisper stories into my lap.
A little blackbird goes to the moon,
seeking a way to sleep through dawn.
I say *come on*. I say *yeah, right*.

Rain springs me another leak in the ceiling.
Your brushstroke grows uneven. I'm moping,
waiting for the devil to make me an offer.

Oh, hatchet man. Oh, chatterbox.
Reach me, reluctant, under the coats.
Smooth the dark parts. Sometimes what gathers doesn't move.

Derek Mong

Blackout

Little blue bolt on a split wire—
shock in the dark, my corrupter

of clocks—

you quiver once then kindle flames
that lick the bark off evergreens,

one's broken bough

unbound you from your artery,
so blow the grid and burn the tree

till block by block the dark

will dawn along these gravel roads
and cars crawl home on the harness

of their highbeams. Let the tiki

torches dot the lawns. Let screen doors
swing with laughter and lukewarm beer.

Next door

my neighbors cuss the curfew cop,
someone shoots roman candles off

their roof and cheers.

I'm home, upstairs, stripped to nothing

but my underwear and running

in the dark. My lips part—

I plunge towards the emptiness
where a bed should be, its mattress

the net beneath an acrobat

blindfolded, free: my fall is like
the time it takes a match to strike

and singe

the sheets: I am a comet streak
or spark. I will end incomplete.

The Somatosensory Cortex

*pile up on the interstate . . .
eighth caller wins a trip to Hawaii.*

*

Leather seats, AC: four doors
crumple like newspaper
on poultry:

But don't tell my heart—

my armpits fume Old Spice,
vents steam my skin. Who cued
up the tunes?

my achy breaky heart

My blood tastes like pennies,
I gurgle exhaust. Why does
the gas gauge hiccup

It might blow up

it's orange metronome? A hand then—
slim fingers spider
my scalp

and kill this man

She screams. Some blood sticks
to my cowlick. Hair perks up:
antennae.

*

1. The world through a sunroof: grey glass speckled with birdshit.
2. Small talk and an ocean that wouldn't shut-up. You held the cantaloupe.
3. *Portable EKG please. Jaws of life?*
4. Optic nerve enervated. Yellow means slow. A cauliflower soaking in red wine.
5. *You're a lucky boy. Oh boy. I got lucky boy. Light my lucky strike, boy?*
6. means don't go means caution means no

*

She sharpens a sandwedge on a bandsaw
And slips the knife side through my scalp.
Pliers please. Where's my sterilized saw?

A quick nip. My hair snipped. She plucks

a boneslice like a hangnail, then sinks a pinky
through the sulcus. *Welcome, my friends,*

to the somatosensory cortex.

If man is his perception, then let him
hide in this fissure. Such lovely

reception. The rainbow in the brain.
*Syphon some gas with a garden hose and stitch
him with wire. Where are my cigarettes?*

*

The watering hole—
 Wednesday afternoon.
 The jukebox nuclear,

you can tell the world

spinning tunes. My waitress twirls
 round a barstool. The beat stops.
 She flips her palms up

you never was my girl

bangle bracelets flash
 like scalpels. Oh poor me
 won't you pour me

you can burn my clothes

some firewater? We'll toast
to the ocean, fresh oysters
and foreign cigarettes

when I'm gone

I ain't leaving yet. You haven't
answered yet. Will you
help me home?

*

7. The world through a beer mug: amber hole, spirals, a halo of foam.
8. I will make my own fruit: bruised fruit, the blues fruit, contusion fruit. Fig Newton.
9. *Or you can tell my lips to tell my fingertips—*
10. The steering wheel slippery like wet rope. Like cove kelp.
11. The cantaloupe has gone bad. Toss it into the sea.
12. When I'm sleepy I listen to AM.

*

O my cockpit little talkbox—

the aim and origin of voice
what have
you told me lately so lately
tossed, you are tumbled, frontal lobe
I am lost, tuned
 . . . *traffic's still backed up*
into a theatre of a thousand
 whisperers
but don't tell my heart I am numbstruck
and bemused *Eighth caller wins a trips to Hawaii!*
By the sweetest schizophrenia
Rescue workers struggle the volkswagon burning
a single head, still talking lodged
in an oil drum body buried, neck down
 everyone's braking, rubbernecking
in the sand. High tide's coming soon.

*

Here's the fun part the first part:
Slide the patient through the CatScan
a ribeye in the oven.
We will now read his mind.

See the green part the good part:
like laurel leaves, a coastal T-storm, or salad.

We think it's a growth zone,
neurons sprout like alfalfa or weeds.

Now the yellow part the easy part:
patient enjoys beachsand and fresh fruit,
sunsets on the pacific. Synapses clapping—
like caution lights, a warning. Go slow. No.

Then the orange part the sporadic part
speckles the head like fresh sunspots,
blooms like a flame cloud. We suspect
a tumor or country music.

Still, it's not the red part volcanic
and random. This comes from a woman:
a wink or a hand pushing hair from his eyes.
It's completely untreatable. Let's call it a day.

*

Daylight filters through
webbed glass, warms the dash
like humming

Or you can tell my eyes

a song. My sockets shake
from the interstate, sirens
crying. Has she gone

To watch out for my mind

for a washcloth and a smoke?

If the world is my perception

How do I tune out

It might be walking out

the world. Clamps now. On the paneling,

a hand warm on my forehead

like beachsand—

on me today

Door's jammed. I'm locked down

In a gas can. My tongue's

in the wheel

O man

Darcie Dennigan

The New Mothers

I got a job working at an orphan hospital. Mothers were all I thought about then. What mothers did, what you did if you didn't have one. Babies there never cried, not even the sickest of them, and that was not good, I thought. They did not cry because they got, somehow they got, that if they did, no one would comfort them. And I thought—I don't know why—someone should teach them about comfort. So the other nurses and I bought some clocks and wrapped them in blanket scraps. Each crib got a bundled clock. To mimic a heart. Like you do for dogs. That was the order of how we began to make mothers. We made them meter—the white noise of the clock beating in their sleep, or for one baby who had a brain disease and maybe couldn't hear, we thought, we gave him a loud clock, so he could feel through his mattress the beats. We set a pattern—a clock in the crib at nine o'clock was their nightheart. They liked it. If we took it away, they would kind of fuss, and we'd put it right back, nestled in a blanket near their heads. I was happy we taught them a comfort. And the papers covered it—a *new invention from orphans' nurses—a babybalm device, a mother apparatus*—but really it was just meter, after all, just a pattern of beats—but the papers liked that too—that meter was portable—they thought it was cute that we were teaching the babies to say meter instead of mother. The words were so close in sound, and we were such suckers. We couldn't hold all the babies, and they were sick, but we taught them about beats and that was a comfort. But then the clocks began to break—they were just cheap windups—and when it got too quiet, the babies would fuss. We'd bought out all the clocks and watches at the drugstore down the street, and we couldn't hold all babies at once. Anyway, they wanted noise, not arms. So we began tap-dancing and rhythmically whistling. We came on shift armed with metrical poems. We prayed for a tin roof and a heavy rain. And we were such suckers, we began to believe in the mothering of meter . . . me wearing my watch tight, much too tight, so that I could feel the beating against my wrist—it was a comfort—and as time passed and my wrist began to swell, another nurse asked, why so tight, like a tourniquet?—and I said, palpitating, meter stops the bleeding. At that time, I did have a real mother—most of us did. We'd been held. And now our own mothers were old and it was time for us to hold them, except they were far away, in other kinds of hospitals, and so we, pursuing the bodily pleasure of beating, pooled our money. We bought a grandfather clock for the ward, the kind with a large pendulum—we'd hold it on our breaks and listen. The papers reported it as *a sad turn of events*. We weren't supposed to believe in our own inventions. For *mother* now, we said meter. For *medicine*, we said meter. We taught the babies the Greek root—*med*, we said carefully, *to count and to care for*. We spoke in our baby

voices. See, we said, meter has always been a mother. No one else will love you, we said, in spite of time. We have them the word and its meanings and its sound and its feel so carefully, meting it out as a loving sentence. All that time the babies caged in their cribs. All those nights we'd beat on them, say meter. Shush. Meter, shh, say meter. It's only your mother.

Michael Rerick

8

The uncle, Cryptozoology,
finds
himself and the aunt buried in gray ruins

and says,
 dig, dig, dig,
to the patient aunt

who loves the uncle very much, and finds him
in places he already is, always
 there there and there, just freshly dug up

so she stands a little off to the side

and watches, here come
 the hullabaloo

pre,
always prehistorically after him,

she says, more the zoology type with
rock-hard scales: feathers: hair: entrails, getting

the blood going, she says, that's sticky, and
uncle digs her
into himself, and is himself

after her, always after her.

10

He says, I built this whale from drowned whale bone,
put stained glass windows where the eyes should be,
made the brain from a telescope mirror,
and it sails and sings daily, he says, name
hovering against relief of pages
in darker parts of the dictionary,
he says, the world has grown slick with its oil,
mouths and mouths stuffed with blubber factories
of evolved mentionables evolving
into ears, he says, this quiet kowtow
with the icon, with the light easier
and easier to touch: this is the whale I built
for you, he says, ready-made and intoned
before we ourselves could intone, he says.

Liz Ahl

You Pantoum

Baby, I dig you
like I dig for change.
I dig you deep and hopeful
as a pirate digs for treasure.

I dig for change,
for transformation, for a clue.
A pirate digs for treasure,
but baby, I dig for you.

Some people dig themselves too deep, but
baby, I dig you
like a dog digs for a bone.
I dig you deep and hopeful.

Jeff Calareso

Courtship

Our courtship was awkward,
like the word *courtship*.
Picture a judicial sailing vessel
out there, slinging arrows
painted on cannonballs
Maybe bailiffs tend the sails.

Perhaps the poor get
court-appointed matchmakers
scanning the horizon for dinghies.
And attorneys in slick suits
and nautical-themed ties
stay below deck, charting marriages
of the wealthy in their ever-present yachts.

Our courtship was awkward, repetitive
and slow to progress. We weren't
two ships passing in the night.
I was more like a floating car,
and you were something more elegant,
at home in the ocean.

I recognized your skill with knots.
And you, you had to admit
I was ambitious
though sinking.

Joshua Marie Wilkinson

Some Whispering

There are crickets
in the movie house
& a movie house
in your memory
that will undress
your foolish wishes.

Still Life with Black Tea

Did you
find these
bootprints
or did you
yourself
make them?

If You Repeat the Names & Disappear

What story
opened the cistern
& had you
whispering
through your
pillowcase?

Phyllis Koestenbaum

Soup

A husband is lying in bed in the hospital, paralyzed from the neck down. His wife, a former hairdresser, and his mother, who has an Anglicized name that is pronounced Jewish, are discussing his wife's weight. The wife is explaining that she eats nothing these days but bananas, that's why she's so thin. Her brown hair has blond streaks, she has clunky open-toe shoes, she's wearing black. I'll make you soup, offers the mother after a few quiet minutes. Her dyed hair is all blond, she's thin, she's wearing beige, mauve or gray. No, and no more emphatically, the wife says, adding, I don't want your soup. Her voice has a slightly throaty undercurrent. I could make it in your house, the mother says—hers is quite sweet, the voice of a much younger woman. No, the wife says once more—she may have been a smoker—no—again—adding, I don't want you in my kitchen, cooking. Then I'll cook it at my house and bring it to yours, says the persistent mother with the trace of an accent, just a trace, an accent she doesn't mind having. How long will this soup stalemate go on. The husband, whose voice isn't paralyzed—a good thing—shouts *Stop it* to the two of them, his mother and his wife, stopping it. My nurse-practitioner identifies with him, the husband lying in bed, enduring the drama; I can't help it, I identify with his bitchy skinny wife. The nurse-practitioner had a realization on an air mattress in the apartment of her daughter from her first marriage that she is no one apart from everyone, a realization I have not had because for me that isn't true. When I come late for my appointment, "How are you love?" my 76-year-old alcoholic manicurist calls out. I was never her love or her friend and when she asks to borrow 500 dollars I refuse. Then her friend calls to tell me she died.

Mother In Heaven

The hard shit in the upstairs toilet takes two days to flush and still it's not all down. Like Dr. Bikoff when I had a high fever the plumber is called. I don't have to ask—he takes off his shoes and in dark socks totes a heavy bucket with individual leather compartments on the outside for his tools. He calls the shit BM as if we're family and finds everything wrong with the new toilet the other plumber installed. Methodically, gleefully, he corrects the imperfections, philosophizing a steady stream about money and old age. I don't look younger than my husband, who's younger, while I think of the carpet splashed with brown toilet water and the cleaning and cooking ahead and of course it's garbage night. John the plumber loves getting old since he's closer to heaven. Heaven is the opposite of a BM-clogged toilet and John, who seems to be in heaven, is actually in limbo fine-tuning like Uncle Ben the jeweler (who asked to see me when he had cancer), going back to his truck for more tools, to the garage to shut off the water, taking off his shoes each time he comes back. My husband, in pain, moans. I mouth how much I need Mother, to myself, I'm talking more to myself—where is Mother. I'll put her in heaven—she had that one regret, if five decades late, about the judgment that changed my life. I never saw anyone so old as I at 18, at 21 getting younger but still too old. Would Mother love me more in heaven. Waiting for Dr. Bikoff (did he prescribe my rest cure, what did it cure), burning up in my fresh pajamas in the fresh twin sheets, I loved her more than at her death. Mother was a Jew and I'm a Jew but I put her in heaven, Mother and Rosemary Kennedy, Rosemary fucking like a rabbit.

Cynthia Arrieu-King & Sophia Kartsonis

Kathy Coles

Canes and men walking straight into ponds like Magritte paintings.
Man with bowler, man with bowler, never tripping.
So I have to hang this awkward name around my neck
painted poppy red, and tired. A vehicle has room
for a breeze, a bird, and another. Why can't I
be *the* cheese? *The* cheese is at hand. *The* cheese is what
we're talking about, asleep on the checkered cloth. A cheese
travels by train and offends everyone with a smell that changes.

And if one Kathy Cole walks into a bar with a poodle
in her purse or a head full of so-Magritte sky
what will the other Kathy Cole do who has just consumed
her body weight plus eight poodles worth of rice
and then lived to spite? How can one account for all the stray
Kathy Coles waltzing by unclaimed, refusing to make eye-contact
with what I've come to hope is the original as it's the Kathy Cole
I dine with Wednesdays when a-drizzle with confusions-various.

Even that rice so anonymous, clinging to each other's grains
on this Wednesday bowl, not ceramic with fish but a woven
body running on bricks. Flesh, a washcloth
draped on to make the soul's
fever come down. That bastard definite article
elusive like some social number, the name
you have to have three passwords and birth-date for
so another Kathy Cole won't get your annuity, your down, your custom cake.

But they will those clever Kathy Coles, I'll-tell-you.
Why just last week—there goes one now!—one hopped
the number 17 bound for we know not where and *the* Kathy Cole
the Original, missed an appointment with her dentist
or God or was it our lunch date—see Red Pepper
and me there (no Kathy Coles but petulant) chopsticks poised
like egrets & there goes she & she & she in cabs, on buses, one
there on unicycle,
a daffodil in one hand a passport in another and you guessed it—
a forgery!—

oh sure it's *a* Kathy Cole

passport swinging as life goes down the road. I hear we've
got an art show opening, a literacy center program, a country
Western song brewing about the lonesome. And leather
fringe, Coke bottle, and series, we have that private
dream of alone. Come down to the wire. Come down
to the mark, the fingerprint, the breath, the strange C in Cole
that bends back to cover the autograph from rain.

Come down where it matters, you Kathies, you Coles.
In stadiums, in a city park, grocery store, where swipe
a card from your falling-apart wallet, the collective Cole
savings goes down to the price of 12 eggs, 24 tea bags,
225 saltines in a box, and they drive home too, and start:
dinner, one pot of tea, returning calls, weeping, kissing spouse
off. One long draught of water from the tap for hot bath,
the perfect sea for talking to God, requesting that one of us
write the check, while another critiques the rain.

Andrea Dulanto

No, I've Never Seen *The Exorcist* In Its Entirety

but I know about the pea soup vomit,
and Linda Blair, demon child, her head spinning full circle.

I know “The power of Christ compels you.”

I know the music and not from the film clips—

talk about demonic possession,

they sampled that staccato keyboard into an ‘80s dance song
with the refrain:

mother make it stop.

I listened to it on a mixed tape from high school—

B-52s, 10,000 Maniacs, and this song called *I’m Not A Boy*,

typical ‘80s—a girl singer,
disaffected and guttural
at the same time.

Sex without sex,
how did she do it?

How did she know everything
and then pretend not to care?

I want to be where the boys are, but I’m not allowed.

and

*It’s not my fault,
that I’m not a boy.*

Mother, make it stop.

And the fucking truth is I was terrified of *The Exorcist*,
because I didn’t trust my body.

I didn't trust that my body couldn't be possessed,

a 12-year-old girl spewing venom, speaking in tongues, it could be me.

There was no reason why my body couldn't lie back like that, in fever, in sickness,

my body pulling me across a Ouija board, my body in the hands of priests,
in the hands of Hollywood,
possessed.

Larry Janowski

No Hold Barred

for Gabriel Halpern

I remember the friend who cannot make a point without touching my sleeve, another who easily drapes my shoulder with his arm, the groom—full of his wedding day—who thanks me, his priest, for the ceremony and my friendship, walks me to my car across the broad lawn, his hand unselfconsciously holding mine, a welding of men. When my barber shampoos my hair I am most aware that days and weeks have passed with no one having touched me and I do not want him to stop. Most men block the threat of embrace with stiff handshake, would never hold another man except in sweat of triumph or grief. How unlike my brother who never hugs for mere seconds at our infrequent meetings, but holds on, as if to what is easily lost, his grip even longer than the yogi who insists a hug should last for three breaths—two too long.

Joan Larkin

Ashes

I thought they'd be fine and white
as beach sand in a glossy ad
for the good life, honeymoon-cruise
sand, so I was shocked by grit
that was your bones un-
consumed by 1500 degrees of heat
and flecked like the sand at Brighton,
where once I dragged a nice Boston girl
to show her the Moscou, the greasy
kasha knishes, the Polar Bear Club—
old, hairy Russians plunging into icy
brine—a Sunday ruined
and now forgotten, long after the day
I waited in the upstate police station
to sign for your body. If there was a crime
it was your sudden dying, of which I was
innocent, though the cop's grimace
behind the high counter haunts me.
I was often in the wrong then
and thought he could see
how I wouldn't grieve, how I'd stall
for months before I picked up your ashes.
Two ex-wives, two long-limbed daughters,
your last friend and new Dutch girlfriend
cast them into the Hudson
you loved to look at and praise
as fields of heavy paint above and below
horizons you built of wood. And what was left
of your drunk anger and lovely flushed
skin, your terse, barely audible wit
and dark flame of Irish hair
was gone, everything burned, sifted,
dropped into the cold, slow current.

Tough-Love Muse

Praise grief all you want,
More loss is coming.

You think history's cruel;
There'll be worse damage.

Don't sit down with the stupid,
They're going to want to eat.

Forget the one who threw your songs away—
You won't run short of *schmaltz*.

Can you find a sliver of soap,
Comb what's left of your hair?

Lace your shoe? .
Stand up?

Then leave the museum and let
Dust lie on old, fine things.

Breathe in again.
Again. Please

Don't tell me you can't
Sing.



Dossier: Political Poems

Joan Larkin

Preview

Dread of morning and of evening.
Wind a faint hiss,
a wave dragged back across stones.
Blood-moon. Swarm of flies.
Cicada burning a wire through brutal air.

Will we whisper what we know
or bet on silence
or learn to praise the butcher god
while dogs slaver
and loudspeakers go berserk.

Shane McCrae

Poem About the Peaceable Kingdom

If it does not explode, a bomb
is strapped to my chest. If it explodes, I am
strapped to a bomb. *Babysitter*
is perhaps the most searched word on the internet.

All the way to Chicago, my favorite foods
were white for the rest of that year. You leaned out
as we passed a large cemetery
on the left, as if it were

itself a thing in motion. You sat back
and turned the video camera to the cemetery. We passed a sign
indicating the direction of Harlem. Simultaneously,
he ran and attempted

to watch his shoes light up as he ran.

Susan Tichy

Corridor

*for Semezdin Mehmedinovic
& in memory of Yehuda Amichai*

For the thirty-eight dead of the river boats
My husband carried thirty-eight nails

And a jet whose roar had the density of wood

This earth, *this* wood, a poet from the war-zone said
Said dirt of the graves distrusts a metaphor

Distrust a metaphor and the path is lost
Said another poet, another war

*

What O'Keefe said in paint is that light lays hands on us

Not that color is event, but the weight of pure sensation
So rubble, when you touch it, could be absolute blue

Otherwise, the word remains transparent

As when critics said the poet
Must be equal to what she has seen

*

An umbrella closes suddenly in the middle of the block
And forest is not tableau it is a forest

When the hospital corridors ran with blood
They said think of another image, that one's old

Dawn Tefft

The Soul Is a Hostess Cupcake

Autodafe occurs every time you go to the store.

A bowl of fruit sits on the counter.
It says nothing about globalism, stolen wages,
or the pope's verdict on genetic engineering.
If you want guilt, you're going to have to dig.

Swollen hands and screaming mouths
belong to dreams and Jungian psyche.
If pain and waste belong to the collective,
your single growling stomach is exempt.
No one blames you for your modern scurvy
or alleviating it beautifully and in technicolor.

You're going to have to work at heresy.

*Shit, when you're locked up, man,
you can see things out in the world.*

*This isn't like those other magazines
they call you on the phone to sell you.*

Wouldn't you like some . . .
fruit?

Wouldn't you like it
to be that
simple?

A piece of flesh in a color
you rarely sport, let's say purple.
A gaudy sign of the world
you forget you wear
in your Adam's apple,
which may not have originated
in the Garden of Eden,
but still has something
to do with earth. Maybe.
Darwin was as nervous
as the rest of us.

You can imagine geneticists
and all those other freaky science guys
play a lot with their dicks.
That should tell you something.

About earth.
About the pull of physics.
Forces.

*Shit, when you're locked up, man,
you can see things out in the world.*

*Hands that do dishes feel soft as your face,
with mild green Fairy Liquid.*

London bridge is falling down, falling down. . . .
you can make anything a song,
a catch phrase, a catchy phrase.
You can sing until I come to your bed
looking for a dictator who will love me
in the worst possible way.

Crush me.

Pull down my panties and make me skate
in a flag bikini wearing a gas mask.
Force me to be your protest performance
piece. Give me something to fight, get horny about.

*The bomber will always get through—
he won't be happy till he gets it.*

*This isn't like those other magazines
they call you on the phone to sell you.*

The expose begins with Duchovny narrating, *A conspiracy between songs*:

"An Anthem For Doomed Youth" is rewritten every year in the defective neon hearts someone scribbles into Johnny Cash's voice. Another anthem un-anthemed in the most innocuous of ways. *Save me, Johnny, from myself. Save me, Johnny, man in black, man in laurel wreath.* Another public persona trashing hubris from his pedestal. *Well it's too late tonight to drag the past out into the light.*

Cash can watch while I skate around in a flag bikini singing Neruda's "United Fruit Co." to the tune of Madonna's "Lucky Star."

Oh, you think I can't pull it off. I can pull it off.

Michael Robins

Last Days on Spaulding Street

Reelection a rumor that we could believe,
I drank, I slept late despite a fear of looters.

When I was building a frame for our bed,
another arrived in the night & stole the stock

of a perfect lumber, prying away the nails.
Between praise & ruin, we began to tremble.

Candidacy, a promise that wouldn't keep,
my brother was due to return from the war.

Some had flags, & some their yellow ribbons,
I divided so often among the open wine

that the memory closed, our blackened home.
I drank, I slept late, I dreamt a terrible lie.

Nick Twemlow

Election Returns

It's like all-night Atari, again, blindfolded.
I've been listening since I recognized
myself across the street, holding hands
with my mother. She was trilling. & thrilled
to pieces when my father stepped in front
of the oncoming rains, acting stupid
like a human umbrella. I've tried to get them
to agree on a sense of pleasure, had telegrams

sent bearing sex toys to each other.
Dispassionately, of course. I don't know
how such things work. I don't want to get
in the middle of a relationship. Father's rotten
lately with news of his impending relocation.
He's been promised Shangri-La. He took me aside
for a father-son, noted that Mother was not a mail-order
bride, no matter what she tells the commission.

He also tells me that emotional disturbance
is common during intercontinental flights.
Does Mother have a thing for me? He says
Mother's always had a thing for me,
she made quite the effort to change my diapers
when soiled, to write the odd note to excuse
my considerable absences, piled, as they were,
like newspapers at the doorstep of a previous address.

I don't want to hurt you, I said to him. But
I don't want to understand you, either.
I'm trying to re-connect, Father,
in your threat of absence, but,
Mother says the language of family
drama is Greek to me. Just like you'd
expect, she identifies with the wrong
suffering every time we attend

the theater. It's been over two thousand years
since we've learned anything new
about ourselves. Aren't you listening?
I'm not being histrionic, the tea leaves
curled up into beady little eyes, what
was I supposed to do?
Her mother pays the bills with monkeys.
She's taken to shrieking

like a roach, miming the scuttle.
When alone with her I asked
if she thought Mother might still have just a wee
crush on me. I'm doing the roach, she
said, scuttling back under the fridge.
Mother's Mother, may I may I call you
call you that? Did she have lots of sons
when she was younger? Did she pull

the weave each night in wait of one
she truly loved? Does she keep a diary?
Tonight, the moon eclipsed. Fifty-eight degrees
to mete out to the haggard and the healthy.
Father shows up like call waiting,
& I ignore him. He's carrying
around a bog, which reeks of his sick shame.
Where were you when the explosives

went missing? I was outside Mother's
window, stroking my mandolin.
The doctors appear like your first
herpes. Bang! you spread from here
on out. Stethoscopic tongue
jams down the throat
in search of Mother's mislaid
plans. I ask for a moment of privacy

& self-Heimlich on a cane back chair.
Up comes Mother's stash of doctored
passports, stamped in every stripe
of the rainbow. The doctors are not doctors.
The doctors shine their bright lights
& wish out loud for a rainout.
Wish under their breath for the health care
system to reinvent itself, make malpractice

a thing of the future, once again.
Lawyer up, everybody, come together
right now, sing like Lennon did for
at least a mindful end to one's misery.
What's a night go for at the Waldorf,
anyway? When Mother taught
me how to really *listen* to opera,
she failed to differentiate between

the opera house and our house,
so when I order tickets
to Strauss' *Elektra*, I pack up the wedding china.
This is starting to take on the patina
of confession. Shall I go on? Mother?
I want to go back to something I mentioned
earlier. War. We know that every soldier has
or has had a mother who may have loved him the way

I wish my mother loved me. God knows
the war, the present war, is all about me.
War, given a little rope, will hang itself from time to time,
just for kicks, like me. The idea of the war
we have watched on TV as being some kind
of video game, is not played out. Is played
by people ten years younger than me
on a daily basis. By the time you read this

the idea that war is some kind of video
game will have played out in the form of
election night coverage. The sudden blue
swarming Pennsylvania. The shock
of red splattering Ohio.
Does my local drag queen vote
his or her conscience?
Is voting even legal in every state?

I ask because I've just started reading
palms again and the party lines just
don't have the life they used to.
They found Mother in a compromise
with her mother, wherein they both
admit each other to a higher security level.
Their first decision, to not vote since they
would have cancelled each other out.

I'm proud of Mother's new found
passion for the senile civilities
going around like the clap, dated
and sterile as that might be. I still
haven't gussied up the nerve
to relocate Mother nearer to me.
Nor to tell her I mistook her mother
for a roach and put my heel down.

Father has gone missing for two months,
though it feels like just yesterday
he was cleaning toilets for five an hour.
Gotta love cheap immigrant labor.
Mother heard word that he's been
relocated to the toilets at Gitmo,
slang in these parts
for shitty law school summer

internship. Mother signed me up to monitor
the election. Had a bank of TVs custom fit
in the living room wall, showed a little leg
for free cable. If I promise to make my vote
count, she says she'll see about that trip
to Colonial Williamsburg. Where she'll
put on the costume of History
and stab a bayonet through my heart.

Black Helicopter

Seven suns sin the sky
days fazing at great speed, each
another page in an infinite flipbook.
Twitch of tree branch in the periphery
miserly chronotopes, tying & untying.
Black helicopter leaves amnesiac
wake. I had the feeling,
alone in the field,
of being watched. Over my shoulder,
(story like so many others)
it was there, black helicopter,
then it was not. I
couldn't make out any identifying marks.
A few birds hop-graph
the skeletal tree.
Jacked into song,
I make a living at elision
yoking skip-trace to icicles
for fingertips. Nothing happens
yesterday. Nothing happens beyond my cubicle,
where I write on company time.
Black helicopter arrives from nothing
researches, departs to nothing.
This is pastoral—I walk among the sheep,
flatten against hillside when black
helicopter surges over, shadow
of black helicopter
passing death through me—
the camera looks this way, that.
A surge of family resemblance
blankets the valley, something
natural about the semaphoring
raven once trained to fly into open Soviet
windows, fly out clasping canisters,
often empty decoys,
of microfiche detailing Soviet plans
detailing the evolution
of avian surveillance—first raven,
then raven-sized drone marked
by imperceptible noise signature
and radar signature of the raven,
then empty canister where

black helicopter blueprint should be—
thus the raven blots the red sky
in clutch of earlier version of itself, itself
an early avian draft of black helicopter.

May 31, 2005

—on the occasion of Walt Whitman's 186th birthday

It could last forever.
It did not.
It was committed to song
and was sung in times
of great sorrow. Some said
it was an indulgence, the sorrow.
It bled for all of us, including
the human resources manager,
who died in the office fire
that investigators concluded
was an arson. It was forgotten,
eventually, though it was resurrected
during the night, years later,
when everyone dreamed the same dream,
and awoke in a fright,
frightened at the thought
that everyone was dreaming the same thing
at the same time. It drove
me to madness. It sang
itself to sleep, sang of itself
to itself. It drove me to madness.
It sang of itself. It sang of a disaster.
It sang of a tsunami.
It sang of a forthcoming plague.
I heard it sung in a bar
by a retired colonel. He, too,
had been driven to madness.
It could not be sung, he sang.
I have tried digital techniques
in an attempt to simulate it.
I have channeled Carlo Broschi.
I have demanded
a recount. He sang these things
because he could not find
an adequate means of expressing
it. Driven to madness trying to sing it,
through the single window
the pale force of the afternoon
light on his face revealed
such terrible anguish. The miles
his face has traveled in search of it.
As I was in search

of it. It cannot be even adequately
expressed. It has driven so many
to madness. It has
driven me mad. It could not
last, it did not. It bleeds,
though, for all of us,
bleeds our rust. It weeps
for the dead inside. Its tears
contain the history
of every desert's absent rain.
Its tears contain
the moments of truth.
Its tears are not notes
to its song, but we must
sing them as if they are.
We must skim the muck
from our pools. We must act
in moderation in everything we do.
We must take care not
to mistake its tears for notes
to its song. It has driven me to madness,
the colonel said. My son
was struck by lightning, the colonel
wept as he said this, seven times.
My son is addicted to depleted
uranium, the colonel wept.
My son depleted his inheritance
in search of it. He was driven
to madness. He is on the jukebox,
do you hear it? The pale force
of Carlo Broschi? We must skim
the muck of centuries, no, of millennia
spent wandering deserts in search
of it, the abstraction we've abstracted
into.
It bleeds our rust. This dust. This
afternoon light reveals the motes
of it. The fire was no accident.
We sing of it, the fire. We sing of it,
the sorrow. We sing for the dust
swept into the dustpan, emptied
into the garbage, trucked out
to the dump. A child's bicycle
tossed near. The wheel spins.
An owl does not alight
on it. The owl is not singing it.
Tu-whit. Tu-whoo. Tu-whee.

James Brock

Me, Left Behind

I am teaching Walt Whitman
to college sophomores in Florida,
something about the grass being the hair
on their grandmothers' arms
and the beards of lovers, grass that
covers and graces graves, and then
the rapture, the dull revelatory kind,
in which my diligent Christian
students vanish, only the leavings
of their white briefs and cotton bras,
sneakers, khakis, shirts, pins, purses,
and even crucifixes. Poof!
And they're all gone. The seven of us
left behind, yes, a little struck
dumb and doomy, until I say,
"Well now, let's really talk Whitman!"

Does it need saying
that George W. Bush vanishes, leaving
Dick Cheney to suffer a cataclysmic
failure of the heart? Thus, Dennis
Hastert is now my president, all that stands
between me and the unconvertible Jews,
al-Qaeda, Old Europe, North
Korea, Iran, Fidel Castro, and the anti-Christ.
I feel plenty safe.

Sure, I have to hear Mormons
screaming Mimi about staying on
this planet Earth, and yes, endure CNN
and its crawl of "America's Angels!":
Billy Graham . . . Charles Colson . . .
Katherine Harris . . . Kurt Warner . . .
Thomas Kinkade, the Painter of Light™ . . .
Sure, lots of the left behind will gnash
their teeth, repent bitterly, start self-destructing,
but not me.

Need I say that my ex-wife,
the Southern Baptist, is gone? So, too,
my fourteen-year-old son, and it
comforts me to regard them
so full of God that I am humbled,

meaning low or lowing, but not
low-down. What comforts me, too,
is how I will go home
after this divinely interrupted class,
to my Gerri, and we'll touch one
another, our unregenerate selves,
for to touch is to stay. We'll
have dinner, rice, steamed corn,
a beer, and then a dip in the community
pool, or maybe a twilight trip
to the edge of the Everglades,
to listen to the spoonbills and dragonflies
hum and call and mate before
nightfall. There, we will become
sleep heavy, among
these resting animal kin, amid
all this untroubled grass.

Nin Andrews

Sleeping in Class

Last night I fell asleep during the president's speech.

It reminded me of how often when I'm lecturing,
everyone passes out. I think of the story of Eutychus.

How he nodded off right in the middle of a lecture
by St. Paul, himself. Imagine.

A saint is talking, and a person falls asleep.

Eutychus fell out of a window and was stone dead.

Paul had to bring him back to life.

But if Bush is talking, and I'm lucky enough to fall
and whack my head, don't bring me back.

I won't think you're any saint.

Kelle Groom

33 Reasons Not to Attend the White House Conference

You will be required to show up in Tampa at seven a.m. to register.
You will drive to a hotel in Tampa the night before & get lost on

the one-way streets. You will request a non-smoking room & be
given a room full of smoke. You will become claustrophobic

in the elevator because you don't know how to insert your room
card to open the elevator door. You will pay sixteen dollars for

a fish sandwich because you are too tired to find a restaurant.
Your boots are not made for walking the four blocks to the conference,

though they are sleek. You are not wearing a blue suit. The White
House speakers appear to be three cheerleaders in their early 20s

with bouncy hair, abundant make-up, and end-of-sentence lilts.
Jeb Bush will speak & receive a standing ovation. You & two

Catholic ladies will remain seated. (It is not that you are prejudiced
against men named "Jeb"—you liked the one on *Beverly Hillbillies*.

But that was Jed.) Attorney General Ashcroft will speak & receive
a standing ovation. You & two Catholic ladies will remain seated.

Ashcroft will imbed seven manipulative stories into his speech,
one involving a boy with Down's Syndrome who sang with him

at church. The federal security guys are spaced a foot apart all
around the room. You will wonder if the feds notice you don't clap

or give a standing ovation & wonder if this is considered a minor crime.
One of the feds will seem to find you attractive, smiling while you eat

your vegetarian wrap with no dressing, inching closer, as if all the
security guys are playing a game & taking the place of the man in front

of him at designated times. You wonder if the security man will decide
you are a Communist & put you on a list, or at least put you on a list

of non-Republicans. You will want to stand up when Ashcroft
is speaking & ask a brief question about the war. You wonder how

the security guys would respond to you behaving like a citizen
of the United States. Jeb & Ashcroft both have remarkably pink

skin, the way a baby brought back to life is said to be pinkish.
Either Jeb or Ashcroft will say that he is building the first faith-

based prison. You & the Catholic ladies will look alarmed. Jeb
or Ashcroft will receive a standing ovation. One of the Catholic

ladies will tell you that in Pennsylvania there were homeless people
who lived well, & you will want to show her the shelter in Orlando

with 750 people living in an old TV station from the '50s,
including Mary and 185 other children under seven years old.

When the blond-bobbed cheerleader comes back out, one of the
Catholic ladies will say, *Here's my favorite*. You will fall asleep

in your chair even though you've had six cups of coffee. The coffee
stand will close, its register tape finishing a celebratory wave, though

you still have to drive home. When you decide to visit a Cuban-
American poet instead, you pass a restaurant called the Seven Seas,

the side wall a mural of a woman's head with the body of a crustacean.
Though you need to eat dinner to balance the yin of six cups of coffee,

you are nauseated by the Shrimp Woman. You pass Armenia again—
at Thanksgiving it was the mark of too far. You pass S. Rome, making

you sad for the winter gone in central New York, missing M. and the
snow angel. When the Cuban-American poet is running late, you will

consider putting your head down on your table in the bookstore,
like in elementary school when you'd had enough.

Peter J. Grieco

Baghdad Bound

Andy writes

Hello All—This trip gets more intriguing
as it goes. Have been “in travel status” for 18 hours
and have only advanced several hundred miles
from Kuwait City
to Camp Stryker on the edge
of Baghdad Int’l Airport.

It is astonishing the lengths
to which one must go
to traverse this modest distance safely.

We are waiting with
50 colleagues and soon-to-be close confidants
in a “Rhino” convoy—busses triple wrapped
with a day’s production of the old Lackawanna mill.
They run on odd hours.

After this, I will settle into a more normal
environment in the “IZ,” where coalition troops/embassies
contractors, the UN, and a couple of Iraqi ministries are located
a 3-square mile zone surrounded by 12’ concrete t-walls
Baghdad’s “ultimate gated community.”

An interesting sight as we wile the hours
(on the baking tarmac) are the partially crushed
hulks of French-built concrete bunker-hangars
hit in Gulf War 1 when Saddam was
(briefly) using them to invade Kuwait. If this
were regular commercial air travel
I would probably be writing a long letter
to Customer Service
not to all of you.

How can I describe the scene
here at Camp Stryker?
a truly surreal vision—a standard KOA tent city
enlarged 20-fold where I am lost
for a seeming eternity like a 7 year-old.
I pick my way down dusty rows of tents
from the Dinning FAC to the Internet Cafe

to the Baskin Robins trailer, the non-stop
domino/ping-pong hall. Add in
the roar and stench of massive generators. Take away
anything quaint. Think of
the desolate squatter communities
on the sand dunes
at the southern extremes of Lima.

Put it together with many large
lethal-looking tracked and winged vehicles
parked wherever they happened to have
stopped, endless
volleyball games under floodlights.
Travellers and troops all looking dirty and weary.
Folks stay civil and seem to pull together. But it is just a
weird, weird place.

Alas, photos are either not allowed
because of security, or rendered
impractical by the dark.

Robin Chapman

After 9/11

We ask our neighbors to dinner.
Dig up new beds for tulips and squills,
pet the cats an extra long time,
feed the birds extra rations. Also the squirrels.

Send money to third world women's
cooperatives, buy one group a sheep,
another a toilet, reread *Oedipus Rex*,
thinking again about fault.

We volunteer to clean up the park,
pull buckthorn and garlic mustard;
buy a young man's journal of travel
through Afghanistan seven years ago,

invite our friend over whose wife
has volunteered six weeks for the Red Cross
mental health team in New York City,
hang on her words for ground zero truth.

CJ Evans

Think, occasionally, of those lost from our
lives.

We have seen the bodies. And our napes itch
equally. We make the apologies
if apologies are due, ignore the men

dictating what a proper response
may be. When the wicked water drew up
over their toes, surprisingly warm, who

worried what they thought? We wonder for them.
Taste the penny of panic, pile our bodies
under their feet to hold their heads above

for one minute more, since the last
thing we want is to want them back.

Valerie Martt Wallace

Before and Now

A poem about nightly news of dead Iraqis laid out like children's shoes at a red tag sale, and security video of a teenager walking away with her rapist, surrounded by tall trees and garages. And if you throw a party and crouch by each guest, it's life as usual, before and now, when a car or back pack might explode, and government is inflexible and distant as a teacher bully, and you accidentally lick your finger with a paring knife when someone says Remains washed ashore, or, Remains in the garbage. And you wake in the middle of the night and think, Such a small amount of blood. Death seems close as your own kitchen, so you get up and close the window and rinse the knives and plates. You look to wineglass rings on the counter for answers, but they're just circles, already difficult to trace.

Comfort Inn

I'm sitting by the TV, still thinking about my sunset walk around the golf course last night, where I decided there was a 50% chance I would go back to Kevin if he called, disappointing everyone including myself.

Three handsome men in camouflage and combat boots carry five bags of guns through the lobby. One man's got black patches with gold letters that say "Sheriff" on his shoulders. If I were running this hotel, would I allow five bags of guns?

These are men who could kick down doors, no problem. I decide I want them on the case if there were a crazy man loose snatching children. Then I remember the early images of Fallujah, and the family wrapped in their ordinary clothes in the corner of their kitchen while American riot gear soldiers tore up the air shouting commands, unrecognizable as human beings. The baby boy watching the waving gun.

I would lose the judgment call on guns at the hotel, and the golf course was longer and muddier than I expected. I was alone out there but that's not the metaphor I want to walk away with. I prefer an insight involving persistent sky, changing and always beautiful. The lights twinkling on, after a long indecision between drama and spaciousness. The hunters have cleared out and two kids in PJs just came down the stairs. The girl is long and thin like me, but she's wearing flannel clouds.

Susan Rich

Day Six: Looking Out from the Lighthouse Café

Pacific Beach, WA

Off Highway 109, the war recedes
behind rows of splintered homes

spray-gunned in lemon and pale green.
On the high definition lounge TV

the NASDAQ reported up sharply—
people walk dogs, buy gasoline;

and I try to imagine the news anchor
far off from this off-season town

where a chain link fence separates
residents from Roosevelt Beach.

In Holland, 1942, the Nazis shot
the Dutch for swimming in the sea.

In the next red sparkling booth
a mother lays her daughter down

she changes the soiled diaper;
the waitress with tears

in her pocket takes my order
and pretends not to see.

Sarah Lilius

America Takes a Seat

America settles his big
ass into the sand.
A plastic force is
government,
hell-limping into places
he will never understand.

White covers brown
when he repaints
the world.
An aching globe,
the continent shifts
as America sits down.

Elaine Equi

Perversely Patriotic

Terrorism has ruined
S&M for me.

Now it just seems
like watching
the news.

Aaron Belz

Reagan to Brady

The bullet
headed
for my head
hit yours instead,

and as I age
my curse will be:
I won't remember
you took it
for me.

Tom Orange

The War is Unwinnable

He denied that, if America went to war, such a war would be unwinnable

He rebuked those who suggested that the war was unwinnable

It was obvious, once they realized the war was unwinnable, that they wanted out of Afghanistan as quickly as possible

The top leadership never went to the secretary of defense or the president and said, "This war is unwinnable the way we are fighting it"

Publication of the papers proved the Vietnam war was unwinnable, changing the climate of opinion and the course of history

Don't try to scare us into siding with Israel or into believing our war is unwinnable unless we take on Israel's enemies, too

Interviewed on the eve of Remembrance Day, they fear conditions will be worse, the enemy more ferocious, the war unwinnable

"Experts Called the Afghan War Unwinnable—Tell It to the Taliban"

The book reveals the depths of depression into which the president sank as he privately concluded that the Vietnam War was unwinnable

Even in early 1965, he believed the Vietnam War to be unwinnable, the implication drawn by some that he subsequently sent thousands to fight and die in a cause he knew was futile

It didn't take away the fear that the war was unwinnable, but it did galvanize Americans

The film shows the president, bewildered and frustrated, finally accepting that the war is unwinnable

Over and over again he indicates that he knows the war is unwinnable, yet he digs in deeper

Lawmakers have contended that the guerrilla war is unwinnable and the Colombian military is a weak and corrupt ally

Recognizing that the war was unwinnable, that it was turning France into an occupier, brutalizer, torturer and pariah among nations, he agreed to Algerian independence

Envoy Calls Civil War Unwinnable

After the Tet offensive of 1968, the anchor returned from Vietnam to pronounce the war unwinnable

Do they go on fighting a principled but ineffectual campaign, or do they accept the war is unwinnable

The military consistently ignored estimates by the NSA and other intelligence services that showed the war was unwinnable

Truckloads of popular wisdom say that guerrilla wars are unwinnable

He retired from the Army in 1971 after he called the Vietnam War unwinnable on national television

It has, of course, been to take the stand that the war was unwinnable and therefore wrong

The war has been unwinnable for years, claiming two million lives and tearing Africa's biggest country in two

His new book recounts how hardliners planned a Vietcong-style "Tet offensive" to convince the British public that the "war" was unwinnable

Not only is Russia not winning the war, the war is unwinnable

In defining a war that is unwinnable, certainly by 2004, the president will be able to ask Americans to allow him to continue the fight

The frustrations of fighting a war that was unwinnable on such terms against a ruthless terrorist enemy that murdered more than 2,000 people over 30 years without scruple tempted some soldiers into fighting an intelligence "dirty war"

He talks about his realization that the war was unwinnable, about a private memo to the president, about whether he resigned or the president fired him

He used the "CBS Evening News" as a bully pulpit, particularly when he said in the 1960s that the Vietnam War was unwinnable

Iraq has not had—and may never have—its moment when a news anchor travels to Iraq to inspect the situation and pronounces the war unwinnable

But at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, gray-haired men and women in floppy boonie hats and faded green battle fatigues worried aloud that a new generation of veterans is being forged in a war as unwinnable as their own

For its part, the Sudanese government saw the war was unwinnable and wanted US sanctions lifted

They destroyed Britain's air of invincibility and convinced many British leaders that the war was unwinnable

There was little he could do to convince the president that the war was unwinnable

Calling for the Defense Secretary's resignation is as bad a signal as saying the war is unwinnable

To say this morning, while our troops are under enemy fire, while American blood is flowing on the battlefield, that this war is unwinnable is an insult to every man and woman who has ever fought and sacrificed under the flag of this nation

The administration is unwilling to learn from the experience in Vietnam and Afghanistan, and to recognize that the war is unwinnable

The Congressman, a former marine and staunch supporter of the Pentagon, caused consternation when he said last week that the war was unwinnable without a large injection of troops and more international help, neither of which are seen as attainable at present

Political fashion in Washington holds that the war is unwinnable

It was more a sense that the war was unwinnable and not being won and not worth the price

There is a consensus that under the present plan the war is unwinnable and that it will not be possible to prevail until there are more troops on the ground

Some members of Congress—either out of a passion to defeat the president, pique at not being listened to by his administration, or simply a need to hear their own voices—are declaring the war “unwinnable” or “a quagmire,” or are demanding an “exit strategy”

It faced the president with a choice: either to commit hundreds of thousands of additional troops (as happened in Vietnam) or accept that the war was unwinnable on conventional military criteria

The candidate has accused the president of making the United States more vulnerable to terrorist attacks and charged that the president's stubbornness could make the Iraq war unwinnable

The candidate has been wise to shun the advice of those telling him to detail an exit plan and to say the war is unwinnable

What he "confesses" in his book some 20 years after the end of the Vietnam War is that the war was "unwinnable and morally wrong," and that the United States should have pulled out of Vietnam as early as 1963

The author said that by early 1972, if not before, the administration had concluded the war was unwinnable

No amount of valor or heroism can conceal the fact that they were sent off under false pretenses to fight a war that is unwinnable

Watching him just back from Vietnam in 1968, declare the war unwinnable, the president turned to an aide and said that if "we have lost him, we have lost the country"

But the sheer extent and bloodiness of the offensive convinced US elite opinion that the Vietnam War was unwinnable

When he returned from Vietnam in 1968 to declare that the war was unwinnable, the White House too concluded that the game was up

"If I've lost him, I've lost the country," the president remarked after a 1968 report by the news anchor, saying the Vietnam war was unwinnable

The U.S. will pull out in any case without achieving security or democracy: the war is unwinnable

U.S. and Iraqi casualties continue to mount in a war that is unwinnable—politically, if not militarily

This stupid, ill-conceived and unnecessary war is unwinnable and wrong, and it must end

The South Vietnamese government was so corrupt, the people were so war weary and the war was unwinnable

The same sense that the war then was "unwinnable" motivates me once again to take to the streets

The “forgotten war” and the “unwinnable war” are explored in two new books

Hence it could never prevail, not even with a half-million American troops,
making the war “unwinnable”

The media and the Congress decided that the war was “unwinnable” and it
gradually became so

If Jacksonians begin to perceive the war as unwinnable or a failure, there will
be little future support for an expansive foreign policy that focuses on
promoting democracy

“The most trusted man in America” departed from his customary impartiality
to venture his opinion that the war was unwinnable for the U.S.

The former Labour MP, who also took part in the demonstration, described the
war as ‘unwinnable’ and said it had been waged ‘for oil and power’

After he had concluded that the Vietnam War was unwinnable, things would
have been much worse if he had abandoned ship

In May 2004, the Congressman warned his party that the war was unwinnable
unless more U.S. and coalition forces were sent to Iraq

The Congressman rankled Republicans during last year’s presidential election
when he said the Pentagon had to change direction in Iraq or the war
would be “unwinnable”

Most journalists and most academics think the war is unwinnable, but 64
percent of military officers believe the U.S. can prevail

In May 2004, the Congressman warned the Iraq War was unwinnable as
presently charted, funded and supported

In 1969 the president and secretary of state knew the Vietnam War was
unwinnable

You are seduced by some of my colleagues who argue that the war is
unwinnable and that we should bring our troops home now

The politician meant the war was unwinnable unless the Bush administration
adopts a new strategy

A Democrat who was an enthusiastic early supporter of the Iraq invasion
bluntly and publicly declared the war unwinnable and called for pulling
troops at the earliest feasible time

How does he declare victory when he and the Democrats keep insisting the war is “unwinnable”?

The trusted paterfamilias of “CBS Evening News” helped precipitate U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam when he used his exalted network perch to declare the Indochina War unwinnable

Amidst the hand-wringing from the left insisting that the Iraq war is “unwinnable,” it would certainly be useful to discuss what winning or a victory would actually look like

But I don’t recall any mention here of prominent Democrats telling their party chairman to shut up when he called the war unwinnable

I firmly believe that our belligerence in Iraq is totally wrong, the war is unwinnable and our troops should be pulled out immediately

The former CBS anchor, whose 1968 conclusion that the Vietnam War was unwinnable keenly influenced public opinion then, said yesterday he’d say the same thing today about Iraq

Urged by his boss to give his personal view, he said the war was unwinnable and the US should exit

He forecast correctly in 1968 that the Vietnam War was unwinnable and the US should exit

He says the war is unwinnable. The Bush administration knows it. You know it, too

A war that is unwinnable in Iraq is proving to be correct

Nobody in this era of what the former “Nightline” host describes dismissively as “boutique journalism” has the kind of mass audience and unconditional trust the anchor held when he shook the nation by declaring the Vietnam War unwinnable

The coverage has not constituted another “Cronkite moment,” comparable to the declaration by the CBS-TV anchor that the Vietnam War was unwinnable

When the ABC anchor was hurt last month, some commentators were speculating that the publicity surrounding his injury might prove to be the Iraq war’s “Cronkite moment,” a reference to legendary CBS news anchor visiting Vietnam and coming back to announce that the war was unwinnable

And since there is zero chance of that happening, a majority of troops seemed to be saying that they believe this war to be unwinnable

He realized that the Algerian war was unwinnable in that the rebels could never be extinguished

When and for what reasons did you change your minds and what lessons have you learned from the war? Was it the recognition that human and social costs of the war were too high? That the war was unwinnable?

Cullen Bailey Burns

After the War

The birds hold the moon up.
Had I known this sooner, perhaps
my arrows would still rest

in their quivers, and the marriage
would not have tumbled so,
bloodied, trailing a little light.

Andrew Kozma

Of Mixed Principalities

The Prince, Chapter III

There is this illusion of you I hold in my hand.
You have looked inside all the other books
and this is the poem for you. Tell the others to avoid
self-motivation. There is only one clear way
out of this, and it involves quiet desperation
of the mouth and gentle tricking of the sounds
that come out: come now, you are a visitor,
and for that I am deeply enraged. If you do not own up
to whom you have committed. If you take
a stance and practice it for hours. Days. This year
is the year of the groundhog with perfect vision.
Taken the place of the president, I have become
something worse, something purple, and the co-
conspirators adopt me with smiles, convinced
the reins are supple and bright as a jail.

How Cities or Principalities Which Lived under Their Own Laws before They Were Occupied Should Be Administered

The Prince, Chapter V

Give me your innocents, your free presses, your abhorrent
delicatessens, the plates on which you display cheese.

Give me, for that matter, even your platters, of course lacking
heads, and your Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday dress.

Give me the end of all your searches, a dearth
of curiosity, that stack of letters addressed, stamped, and eager.

Give me your open byways, your crowded flyways,
the bays of warehouses, the tongues of all your merchants.

Give me the knowledge of where you live, how feet
conform to shoes, a woman adjusting height to the occasion.

Give me your lucky numbers, your naive and black-winged rooks,
the air that distends above factories, solidifies, descends.

Give me the following: a slightly used toothbrush; dying yeast;
the lukewarm excess from a bath; clean sheets; a dirty counterpane.

Give me the postdated checks and fresh-cut keys
you hold with claustrophobic desire: There will be no need.

Clay Matthews

Poem Ending with the Beginnings of a Horror Film

It's the every car that goes tearing through the night.
Where the dream starts to walk in the image of man.
Put your life up on a set of blocks in the front yard
and you can get underneath and see what the motor means
in relation to a cool breeze. Crawl ahead. Cough ahead.
Go ahead and wish for something terribly shiny.
In the beginning I was something else but I was a child
nonetheless who ate his way into a solid structure.
No loss at the initial losing so far as I can remember
but there have been losses, heavy ones, dear reader, along
the way. The ways to California are several and distant
and winding past the gas stations, the people calling
themselves towns, the mattresses and refrigerators strung
across a landscape that I read once looked much more
like your basic everyday heaven. Heathens in the front
yard. Second helpings on our way to the ocean. Heaven again
in the distance of the water or in that pull of the body
as our two-thirds lurches toward its salty home. And salt
for the heart and all over the French fries. I am a long
sight from the dying as I know it but I take a little in
with each passing (wrong word). It's the automobile
as once scratched out on a pad of paper. It's the America
as once I pledged to. And the ocean as it keeps resisting
the structure of a cymbal. And the hope each morning
I fill myself with, for another long day of driving
to that dark blue motel that continues to wait at the end.

Alan Michael Parker

Why I Am Afraid

I got up this morning thinking of
why I am afraid, & all day & then this evening
when work was done & I walked the seaside town

to watch the gulls circle & gather,
& as a flock curve out to sea,
I thought of the news, sticks & stones.

So I act: I make this
little story of my fear,

although my fear remains inscrutable,
& I wonder if there is a Form of fear.

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates says,
"I was afraid that my soul
might be completely blinded

if I looked at things with my eyes,
and tried to grasp them with my senses."

On the hillside beyond the highway,
cows shake their baggy heads

& the cowbells clang,
& the smell of the fresh-cut hay
becomes part of a series of actions, inscrutable.

When the gulls & the cows
& all I have not done this day
fade into the dusk—

the dusk lined with cowbells out of tune
& the cries of the gulls—

I find a place to eat,
sip tomato soup in a diner
where the world of opinion clatters.

I try to read the *Phaedo*.
In my hopes, I am afraid.

*

I cannot believe what happens
doesn't matter, so if I walk through a field

& then through a stand of pines,
behind one, between two, & all the time
enthralled by redolence, blind,

it doesn't matter; or if I only
walk through town & go back to my room;

or what I say aloud doesn't matter,
or what we do to one another.

The world of opinion is not the world,
I tell myself, offer my opinion.

*

Which is not to say this is
an essay on bucolics & indifference,
or merely on the need

to feel for one another
as a form of action.

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates suggests
that the Forms are in nature,
but not, of course, in the world we sense,

where “sticks and stones . . . appear equal to one man.”
He is talking about the Equal:

the pines silvered & mottled with light,
beautiful, but no more real
than the billboards slicing the hillside,

& maybe no more beautiful;
(we’re all on TV & living our
22 minutes until the weekend,

& I’m here too, re-run,
another man who is afraid).

*

What does beauty prove?
The need to feel beyond the senses.

But isn’t beauty in the world?
It is.

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates counsels us,
“the invisible is unchanging and the visible
is always changing,”

& Cebes agrees, & Simmias nods his head.
When the dusk changes,

& the cowbells from afar cease their urgency,
& I turn up my collar & walk

past an open door, the smell of smoke,
people in a bar & laughter,
back through the splashed lights to my room,

my fear changes.
My fear changes:

Is it visible & of the senses?
Or is it beyond?
It is.

Which?
Both.

Both?
So what have I proved to myself?

The night is visible & chilly
& the visible is not enough.

So why am I still afraid?
Answer the question with a better question:

What remains to be proven?
Beauty.

Matthew Brogan

Keep Your Head

down, I feel a prayer coming on. White smoke fingers
Mars; the apostles rub their paddles:
rescue or recovery? Never mind
the ringing in your ears; it's only temporary,
while music is sacred as any Inquisition.
My God is not your God. Oh, well: time,
I guess, for Catholic girls to lift their skirts
and run for cover, for this morning, in the desert,
the barometer was down and the one true prophet woke
with sand between his toes. Some things are unforgivable
on this end of the apartment block. I could recite
them for you in a deep, mellifluous voice,
but I no longer have the receipts.

Jerome Sala

The Flintstones

stone age
communism
turns
capitalist

owning property
working for the man
and loving it

natural
as a brontosaurus crane
or a purple
pet dinosaur dog
named Dino

proving once again
like everything else
on the waves

that the way we live
is the way it's supposed to be
must be
cause it's always been this way

as far back
as that cartoon called history
can see

you can count on it
invest in it

it's bedrock

Darcie Dennigan

The New Constellation

I loved the Starbucks. I lived by the lip of the cup. I lived at a slow clip and loved how the Starbucks sped my blood. How the Starbucks spread its bucolic rug and lit its electric fire—for any of us. And we stayed on in the lamplight. We had our coffee and our milk. Brown coffee and white sugar and a silvery milk. It was all meant for us, in a way that the trees and constellations were not. The Starbucks room an easeful box, in a way that the night outside was not. For the inside population, the lamplight loomed large. What shone, shone for us—our bills luminous, our coins burnished. We did our work—I loved the white purpose. The Starbucks hung no clock—I loved the silver sense of time. No one knew me—all had a brown familiarity. But soon I would be out on a tangled bank as the river snarled and the night turned and the Starbucks shut. To be sealed back inside!

I dreamt of a plastic energy, of the world set inside a box. The box was a Starbucks where rivers turned to spigots, the stars to satellites, and we all had a sterile bill or silver cup of milk, trading one for the other, down the line, across a broad path of brown rug. . . . We shaped the worth of the world. How I loved the made world. It afflicted me, how I loved the Starbucks. We had made it ourselves with luminous hands. What a thing it was.

Matt Lombardi

Dirty Brown Sky

Old district attorney what's-his-face
and his balsa wood suitcase,
the '56 carburetor
that sits on his desk

is just a lighter.
He took a croquet mallet
to the saloon doors
on the bathroom

the day his daughter
wore a flag as a dress.
I tried to keep him away
with a rusty tin shoehorn,

but he's got liver and onions
settled in his iron skillet.
Wife left him
for a nurse.

Kurt Brown

Global Warming

I've been wanting to write a poem about the icecaps,
wondering how to make myself care. It's so huge, this event, like God,
not really anywhere, yet everywhere at once, so hard to grasp
which is why the newspapers go on clucking about political correctness
while pundits let us know that the latest research indicates
the South Beach diet may not be that effective, or even good for us,
and human cloning may soon be a fact, but is it ethical and should we pursue it?

I remember once in Colorado, after a night of carousing, my friends
and I stumbled through town, arms linked, yelling at the top of our lungs:
"The icecaps are mellllllllllting! The icecaps are mellllllllting!"
each one of us a drunken Paul Revere, though we woke no one up,
not a window blazed in that sleeping village, and the next morning
frost spangled the meadows and our heads pounded like people
in a cheap hotel pummel the walls, demanding quiet.

In my poem birds circle a dead seal on the ice, its blood leaking
out into the snow the way strawberries crushed against linen
spread from thread to thread until the original stain is ten times larger
than when it began and birds wheel above, shrieking, waiting for the body to bloat,
then burst, its hidden delicacies exposed until the bones,
clean and ribbed as ice, blend into the snowpack.

In a poem by Lars Gustafsson, a large dog bolts out onto a frozen sea
as his master lags behind, watching the dog rocket into the glare,
running so hard he seems to shimmer as he begins to shrink with the distance,
then vanishes finally into the ripple of light at the edge of the horizon
while the man stands there, calling and calling perhaps for the dog to come back.

But he doesn't. Not in Gustafsson's poem anyway. Not even in this one where I've begun to think about the fact that the human brain shrinks an ounce every decade after fifty, which means I've lost an ounce so far, an ounce of memory and time, which doesn't seem so bad, considering how much time we have, yet I feel like that island in the South Pacific, the small one where fifty people lived but now it's gone, vanished under rising seas as if it never existed.

Every day, huge hunks split off and plunge into the sea, which has been filmed, you can watch it on Discovery Channel between promos for "Living Predators of the African Veldt" and "The Golden Treasures of Tutankhamen."

It's like watching the demolition of an enormous building which will have catastrophic consequences for every creature on earth, including micro-life—nits, mites, diatoms, bacilli—the chemical structure of their tiny world shifting in a cataclysm of infinite degrees but just enough to swathe them in a genocidal broth of heat and saline.

Still, the pretty young newswoman smiles as she assays the weather map: "This has been the warmest winter on record," she purrs, making it sound so reassuring, so fortunate. "Savor these days," she says, and laughs. Such a gorgeous messenger—no demon or witch, no Sybil—not even some awe-inspiring angel descending in a blast of light to make its announcement.

But it's worse than a nuclear war, it's irreversible and planetary which is why the peak of Kilimanjaro is now mud, and Venice takes another stride into the sea. Such a beautiful catastrophe, tipping towards Eden, then farther, into the desert which in a hundred years will be almost everywhere and whoever's left will be living at the poles about to vanish into light at the edge of the horizon. Unfortunate explorers. Savor these incomparable days.

Jibade-Khalil Huffman

Where Are the Negroes in Hartford, Connecticut?

When we wake up
there is a banner for
the National Rifle Association hanging
in our backyard
the children are gathered

and our neighbor
apologizes for late
beginning his remarks:
where are the negroes
in Hartford, Connecticut, where
is a crossing guard
when you are required
to hear the instruction:
if you are ready
you should clap
if you are standing
you should sit down
attached to an object
under anesthesia
with
the memorabilia
as a prize for
who can fastest
induce sleep
where they are there
to show
what is and

what is
not missing.

Gail Mazur

Borges in Cambridge. 1967.

Bookish, my bookish friend called you, *bookishness*
the failing grade he gave your genius and his own

after your first Mem Hall lecture on “The Riddle
of Poetry.” In that afternoon’s amber light,

you spoke without notes, your translucent, blind face
tilted toward the high windows; you seemed to be

gazing heavenward, speaking softly enough to be heard
in Victorian Harvard’s memorial to privilege

and its Civil War dead, that first heroic generation
of losses that set Brahmin Boston on its down path.

Outside the old “brick pile,” students and bikers
protested the war they hated, war we all hated,

their exhilarating noise filtering, unintelligible
through the indestructible walls, righteous and romantic—

like your romance with Argentina’s gauchos,
swashbuckling across the pampas, who’d thrilled your youth;

you’d dreamt of wounding nobly with a sword,
then endured life as a Buenos Aires librarian

in love with books you’d memorized but could no longer
read. How otherworldly, how disarming, you seemed,

telling us Cervantes’ *la Mancha* was meant to be
an ordinary place, not princely—as if he’d written,

you said, “Don Quixote of Kansas City”—Kansas City
and Mass Ave, your two favorite American phrases.

I listened as if the SDS weren’t racketing the perimeter
of the Yard, blazing quixotically for a future

like the present with its lovely options but without
the dying, the brutal mutilations. Was I really in the hall

then, or tramping outside—the retrospective Gail
remembers both—I know I marched, my fist raised

defiantly like the other demonstrators, chanting
our chants, month after month—*real* to be mattering,

to spill into the streets, to “be counted,” to count for
something: absurdly beautiful, the single-minded ecstasy

of a just cause. Now, memory conflates occasions,
it pauses to hold open my two worlds, offers again

the desperate optimistic din, the quiet lifelike love of art.
The war we thought we’d helped to finish never ends.

Claudia Carlson

The Bees

One fall afternoon
they sent me home before lunch.
The boys next door
danced threats and stones into the bayou.

Mama wasn't inside.
I slipped into the gap between house and shrub
where bees patterned a hum around my skin.
My dolls crouched in the roots

waiting all day to have me tell their story.
I ground potions to protect them from spells
and wove grass beds as
the boys somersaulted and sang

"Nigger-lover dead, shot him in the head,"
until their mother shushed them down.
"Assassinating a president is wrong,
no matter what he said."

Mama's little blue car
throttled into the afternoon.
She found me crouched among the bees,
whispered "My god, aren't you afraid?"

Then I was.

Susie Timmons

Canal of Consciousness

Hello! I am your American Flag!
I know; hard to believe,
a talking flag.

But you're nothing if not gullible.

Me: waiting for my fries to go at Muskies;
You: Edward Hopper.

You've always wondered about The Rooster Club
and now you find
it's nothing more

than a sandwich.

David Baratier

Poem in which the stupider things are recounted

Hitting a bullet with a ball-peen hammer
is where to start, in order to remember
every retarded action in your life. It will knock
your Latinate out of whack, a loop track of feedback
in the ear as every politically incorrect crack
busts loose through your teeth every which way
like Clyde jumping up with speedy monkey fists
cranking you upside the head.

But let us slow down
in time to upstep the complexity as we start moving
chronologically to recapture the Ad infinitum
from the studious vault of stupidity. Can I
flash free from these character tendencies?
It is often said the truth will set you straight,
but does it happen in a recordable amount
of gun powder measured to bore?

If you are like me,
I could tell you about guns, fear, the impossibility of ducking
but this won't become a lesson until you can repeat
the same results repeatedly. This is the unfathomable
part of science, the "monkey see, monkey do" part
of proving the obvious hypothesis. And if something
bad happens later, after these words, people will say
I am responsible for all their actions, like they did
in middle school, that even having this limited contact
permanently contaminated their thinking
and influenced them to do the retarded.

On
my pointer finger rests an American-Indian-made
silver ring set by my friend Royce, with gold flecked,
gem-quality turquoise which is not stabilized. This
covers a fang-shaped scar from a policeman's incisor.
Stupid is as stupid does. There is no made for TV
version. You cannot shake off a punch hard enough
to break the skin. I should take off the ring to remember this
daily. Unstable hard substances are a theme here. Are you
getting this?

If you are heavily armed, go heavy in so doing
this journey towards the simplicity of formless substance.
Shoot like a star. Gut out the red one at the fair for practice.
Or be American, blow things up, tube launch ten Wolf Pack

8 ounce multi-effect report rockets at once, thereby setting ablaze my white starred 4th of July shirt's blue backdrop. Even though flames are painful, especially fiery stars of chest hair, this is a reduction in stupidity with age. Smack around a cop for comparison. Believe you me, and be thankful. The noose is tied. Fate comes in a hangable length with a tough knot.

A bullet shaped amount of Kevlar melted to your left shoulder will change your mind. If you believe me, be thankful. Celebrate some other way. Use the coloring pages, make a freedom cake from the cooking show. Have a party of us. Keep your teeth or make molds while it is still possible. Hope for a formless simplicity in decisions, to achieve the zero option, the null set, but, if absent, still strive for balanced numbers. Both sets. When will I learn me a lesson? Believe me, be thankful.

Kentucky Fried Krispy Kreme

This is my battle hymn
of the race war for you who
haven't been eating enough
of the fried creme-filled group.

If you buy chicken from an old white colonel
you might as well keep the skin on
and remember if one person
calls you a horse, they are selling something
or want to barter.

When two people call you a horse
they are probably racist.

If you buy donuts from a boy
wearing a peppy-white mesh-hat
and he offers you one for free
he has a gun and a job application
behind the register.

If he and four others
call you a horse
without batting an eye
you better saddle up.

Michael Estes

Balance sheet

I can make a pizza, freeze it, and sell it.

I have also been in the business of making my own tools: consider my fine line of ladles.

I can make a ball, freeze it, and ship it.

I have also inked a deal for a truck fleet of global proportions.

I am weighed daily against economies of scale.

I can make everything in aisle 33 in under a week if one size will fit all.

I have made a sundial, read it, and shipped it.

I can make it to the bathroom without help.

I have a good trade deficit. What I leave at the grocery is worth more than what I get.

I can make it in an ingot jungle, but Barb has a ban on machines in the den.

I have to make love and the mortgage payment at the same time—there are deadlines.

There is nothing I don't produce.

Terrance Hayes

Our Best Patton Performer

As General Patton you will be expected to give
his D-Day speech to park audiences twice a day.
To fit in the costume you will have to eat nothing but haggis,
a Scottish dish consisting of a mixture of the minced heart,
lungs, and liver of a sheep mixed with suet, onions, oatmeal,
and seasonings and boiled in the stomach of a slaughtered animal.

It may be that visitors love our General Patton best
because of the huge mightily polished helmet bobbing on a head
twice the size of the body. Notice the cut of his riding pants,
the angle of his cavalry boots. Boys love the nickle-plated Colt
and the .357 magnum our Old Blood and Guts pretends to fire at them.
Fathers love the shimmer of his two dozen medals.

The general's swagger will become second nature to you.
Carrying such an enormous head, your body will seem
drunk on patriotism. Which is appropriate since Patton walked funny.
He walked like a man who dislikes humor aimed at himself.
He was very self-conscious and believed his high-pitched voice
made soldiers think of their grandmothers.
Patton was not a singer because of his teeth.

"We can no more understand a Russian than a Chinese
or a Japanese, and from what I have seen of them,
I have no particular desire to understand them
except to ascertain how much lead or iron it takes to kill them."
Patton liked to say. People of all creeds are welcomed here,
of course. You would be shocked to know
that our best Patton performer ever was a thin Asian girl.

Herodotus, the 5th century Greek historian
who loved tales of battle, foresaw Patton's death in a dream:
the 2 ½ ton truck mashing his Cadillac outside Mannheim
in 1945, the clouds' warble, Old Blood and Guts
paralyzed from the neck down and covered in rain.
I have seen his big head left like a broken sarcophagus
outside the break room by spineless performers.

Herodotus, noted that early sarcophagi (the plural)
were carved from a special kind of rock
that consumed the flesh of the corpse inside.
This should give you a sense what it will mean
to spend your days in the head of Patton.

His favorite animal was the armadillo.
He called Robert E. Lee Jesus. He fell in love
with Dwight Eisenhower between 1935 and 1940.
Distrustful of civilians, Patton measured everything
according to the shaft of his weapon. His word for penis was tank.
His motto was "Lead me, follow me, or get the hell out of my way."

Your Mustache Must Ache

Nightshade sash, velvet patch
In the complexion. You might feel
Yourself vanish into the diesel fog,

The obliterating light and dark of it.
Shadow carved by what divides
The mind and tongue. As if suspended

Less than an inch above the speech,
As if the lip could bear so much history.
For instance, black as the smartest

Girl in class. Black as Hitler's cowlick
Or black as the valance falling from a widow's
Window. Black as the house sacked

Behind that window, and the boots
Coming and going on the stairs,
Or the breathing of a boy locked

In the mirror. Someone washing
His hands wearing black gloves.
The smell of greased metal, smoke

So thick it thins but does not vanish,
Black as a train snaking beneath
The eye, as the roads telling you

How the rain rattles on everything
It touches. The pavement has no way
Of knowing the future. Leading

Into the valley. The wood of burning
Barnyards and bones, ash coughed out
And covering, gaunt and haunted,

Quiver of rhetoric. Oh the weight of it,
Possible as grief and hesitation,
As blindness and the wind struck structures,

Edged and peripheral mustache,
Part fastened fashion, part flag or shadow
Of the flag on this hysterical country.

Joshua Edwards

from Position Effect

Keep your spirit physical they have said
Because of its political nature
Please do not let it run away from you

Somehow into the choir of my forest
The difference between men and women
Has become a ghost in the metaphor
That diminishes the way I think on
How many bodies have hung from the limb
Of romance's search for endless pleasure

It is in a doghouse in a fenced yard
Its only hope is for sudden fury
Timed just right with all of the doors open
And a path clearly marked into the take

In an hour morning will paint yonder hills
The color of a long convalescence

I whistle with popular radio
It is so important to be ready

Their backpacks full of peaches
My friends are going on a camping trip
To scope out where they will make their new ward

N Courtright

6th & Colorado

This city is what it is because our citizens are what they are.

—Plato

The city is here for you to use.

—The Futureheads

Simple then, to cite world's wicker
fieriness, to make physical marriage

into divorce: this is a hellish lot,
the dabble & gobbledygook

of hallelujahs. Thought a moment
was music, but no, gunfire

at the corner store. These lives
is still life: apples, the ceramic bowl,

wine glass & pomegranate, thus
beautiful life. News is exhilarating

with all its daily rampage & I think
as I stir in the sugar, how impressive

is true love, how it's all around us
in this fine land of the dead.

Kate Umans

Dream For a Sestina (or Dream in a Time of War)

In the dream, people came for a re-enactment. In the re-enactment

two people climbed a mountain. When they reached the top
one told the other that it wasn't a mountain. There was no alternative.

It wasn't that it was a hill or that the mountain was eroding.

It wasn't that they were transcending the physical world
or in a distant country where mountains were called by other names.

It was not a mountain—that was all. Each time, the one told was devastated.

The crowd would stand and say nothing. It was sad.
They had come for sadness. They could believe it—

that what they stood on was not a mountain – but it was hard

to endure the sorrow of the person told, the way she stood,
windless, as if she'd known that she was being led to something brutal.

It felt like someone saying to another in the midst of a wedding

or over the light of birthday candles: *you will die*.
This was a re-enactment. No one had been there the first time

when this had really happened. Many people came to see this scene

but most could bear it only once. I was coming for the second time.
I knew how quietly the one to be told would be led up, knew

that even though she did this every day, she had no idea

of what letdown awaited. People did not come for violence.
No one was pushed. The rocks at that summit were not even sharp,

not even hot in the sun. People came for disappointment.

It was terrible each time, and people came to bear that.
There were children there. They had to learn.

I do not know what we descended from.

Idra Novey

The Silos of America

If they sleep at all, the silos of America tend to wake before dawn, murmuring discoveries from nineteenth century astronomy: *spectroscopy*, *helium*, *the perils of hydrogen*. A small and quiet cult, they uphold a single doctrine: never rule out what might fall from a seemingly welcome sky—low flying planes, cyclones, the remotest of stars.

Pausing Outside a Home Used for Torture in '74

Here, where a ruin longs
to be a house, and a house
to be left to ruin.

Where men blindfolded students
and pushed them
down the basement stairs.

The house almost tips with its history,
with a wish to be simply walls
and pillars and patio

so we could walk by, arms
loose, linked, and speak
of window trim, rather than stiffen

into separate postures. Here,
where a house longs
to be left a ruin,

and somebody's come to live,
to plant a trickle
of bougainvillea in the yard.

Both shivering, and over an hour late
to meet your sister,
we continue terribly.

A blast of air chases us across
Jose Domingo Cañas, and across
the pitted road after that.

Andrew Sage

Song of the Machete

O Belgians, your blue berets
Did no good.
I cut you up—you withdrew.

I was made to cut cane, to clear
Land for burning.
I don't feel one way or another

Chopping off the foot of a tall Tutsi
To cut her to size.
First night was closing: you needed

Firewood. You reached
For me.

Paige Ackerson-Kiely

Application for Asylum

I am leaving this country, its name which eels me, sways me
like my lover sways drunkard in the alley. I will leave the
alley, its festooned dumpsters, the girl body, the hundreds of
girls from small towns with their frosted lips & pity them.
Pity me, my fluoridated waters, my poison windowsills
my gnashing children. Pray you stay close to me in Wal-Mart,
the biggest place I have been to date. To date you,
to clasp hands I abandon my right to wring hands,
to lie down on the cold earth as though it were a belly against
my cheek—the whip-kick inside the belly. Am starving I am
running away from food in boxes taking along
my instant smile & pleasant speaking voice.
I am saying God, if you are anywhere, let you be an arctic night.
I decamp the arctic night, all nights I have loved the uncountable
rivulets of your long robe. Undress me as I am fleeing the cloth.
File me so I might leave the nails and cut away my precious hair.

Safety In Numbers

Gaza City a pair of old shoes
one left out to dry.

In the park, a couple folding
into each other. A single
swan preening his feathered
chest. Mites, then none.

To love and buy a scarf.
To have a Winter
by the side of someone
having a Winter.

Is a radiator hissing sad.
A radiator in a weekend home.
It is Tuesday,

trapped on an ark with
a small family
and tons of animals.

Come the unrain,
multiplying.

I'll take as many
as you can spare.

Naomi Shihab Nye

Letters My Prez is Not Sending

Dear Rafik, Sorry about that soccer game
you won't be attending since you now
have no . . .

Dear Fawziya, You know, I have a mom too
so I can imagine what you . . .

Dear Shadiya, Think about your father
versus democracy, I'll bet you'd pick . . .

No, no, Sami, that's not true
what you said at the rally,
that our country hates you,
we really support your move
toward freedom,
that's why you no longer have
a house or a family or a village . . .

Dear Hassan, If only you could see
the bigger picture . . .

Dear Mary, I'm surprised you have
what we would call a Christian name
since you yourself . . .

Dear Ribhia, Sorry about that heart attack,
I know it must have been rough to live
your entire life under brutal occupation,
we're just sending a few more bombs over now
to fortify your oppressors but someday
we hope for peace in the region . . .
Sorry you won't be there to see it . . .

Dear Suheir, Surely a voice is made to be raised,
that's why we admire how you have been speaking up
but don't you see we are also speaking up
for your own interests . . .

Dear Sharif, Violence is wrong
unless we are using it,
why doesn't that make sense . . .

Dear Nadia, I did not know about
your special drawer, you know I like
to keep a few things too that have meaning to me . . .

Dear Ramzi, You really need to stop crying now
and go on about your business . . .

Dear Daddo, I know 5 kids
must feel like a lot to lose in one swoop
but we can't stop our efforts . . .

Dear Fatima, Of course I have feelings
for your own people, my college roommate
was from Lebanon . . .

Dear Mahmoud, I would answer your letter
but you must understand I still
have all those people I'm not answering in Iraq.

D.H. Lawrence

The Late War

The War was not strife;
it was murder,
each side trying to murder the other side
evilly.

Novica Tadić

translated by Steven Teref & Maja Teref

Dark Things

Dark things open my eyes,
lift up my hand, clench my fingers.

They are distant and nearby,
behind the nine hills
in a secret den.

They cannot be appeased
in their nocturnal monopoly
or dawn-cloak.

They stay where they are.
In the chest, in the heart from which they murmur.

The Genealogy of the Executioner

The Blood-guzzler births the Mild One
the Mild One births the Just One
the Just One births the Repairman
the Repairman births the Doctor

the Doctor births the Apparition
the Apparition births the Gentleman
the Gentleman births the Raven
the Raven births the Nightingale

the Nightingale births the Kindly One
the Kindly One births the Amiable One
the Amiable One births the Repulsive One
the Repulsive One births the Most Holy

the Most Holy births the Cobra
the Cobra births the Tame One
the Tame One births the Jackal
the Jackal births the Passenger

the Passenger births the Criminal
the Criminal births the Butterfly
the Butterfly births the Goldfinch
the Goldfinch births the Sow

the Sow births the Cricket
the Cricket births the Hyacinth
the Hyacinth births the Croucher
the Croucher births the Turtle

the Turtle births the Count
the Count births the Hyena
the Hyena births the Gander
the Gander births the Turtledove

the Turtledove births the Bogeyman
the Bogeyman births the Ewe
the Ewe births the Executioner
the Executioner births the Executioner.

Kathryn Regina

The Photograph

It had to have been
a fake. Take this head
in your bag, for example.
Fake. Not real, not even
close. I can see the white
styrofoam through the makeup,
for example, how I look
in the morning.

My left shoe finally caught
up with my right. It said you,
miss, are a criminal.
It's time to put that gun down.

This sky looks suspicious,
too blue and too
low to the ground.
That is not a bomb, it is a burst
of light, not to be confused
with photosynthesis.
That ticking is music and not
what it could be

Like what I'd like
to know about you,
and that church you leveled.
For example, my teeth
and the way they are shining
white in the dirt.

Jenny Browne

The Cry Bone's Connected to the Why Bone

Cold front blasts a train through
the bedroom, one long roar
above late talk of distant war.

Numbers and names I don't recognize
climb, drift, pile higher.
There are exactly twenty-seven

bones beneath the skin of a hand.
There are not as many words
for snow as I was once told.

It's almost morning.
If you're not with us, you're dew.
If you're dew, you disappear.

If you're me this week you see
a baby learn she has hands,
the bilateral little declaration

of a common axis, grip and find.
Put your hand in the air if you've heard
the one about the hokey pokey man.

He may die but you can't bury him.
And if the whole self was never in?
Keep moving keep moving

towards a voice you still recognize.
If you're not with us, you're a fist
and if you're a fist, you can't reach

that collection of wishbones
rattling on
the quietest shelf in the room.

George Kalamaras

Adam and Eve

We're all related to Charlie Chaplin.

John told me this, after I'd told him Spencer Dryden's father had been Chaplin's half-brother.

It went something like this: the southern sycamore was related to the breastbone of the wildebeest; the leopard to the oak; the torn fingernail to a childhood without my father.

It was a promise of perfect harmony, like the incest taboo that still allowed Inuit cousins not only to marry but to take another cousin as an "exchange" wife or husband.

I wish I could kiss myself fully and sensuously in the mirror. I wish I could relate Charlie Chaplin's wanton palm to Vallejo.

Vallejo does, as part of his *exuberant political need to love*, as part of his Dante, his Chaplin.

I know Spencer Dryden is related to a drum roll in my chest.

I became the tap-tap-tapping of a driving survival that somehow excited childhurt divorce into an, *Oh-when-I-grow-up-I'll-always-be-faithful*.

It goes something like this: *Somebody to Love* is equal to *I told you over and over I'd been lonely*; the leopard relieving its primal urge against the rough bark of the oak is equal to sparrow secretions on my morning sheets.

We're all related to Charlie Chaplin. John told me this, just this morning. I told him. We told each other a coupling of one plus one equals a brand new wailing one—a less than genocidal Genesis.

Alicia Rabins

The Story of Noah

What was it like building an ark and leaving some things on the side?
Who watched him pull away from the shore that used to be his hillside rooftop?
He was careful not to think about those eyes too much, those babies.
In the cabin, a raven and a dove slept side by side with branches in their beaks.
His wife was pleasant. His three sons and his three sons' wives
were pleasant. The sound of rain the sound of rain the sound of
rain on all sides lulled like the sides of sleep tugging him down.
But when the rain stopped, the rain stopped being a reason.
In the wooden wall of the ark was a tsohar.
This was a) a window b) a glowing precious stone c) we don't know.
Noah looked up and saw. In the wooden wall of Noah there was also a tsohar.
Sometimes the voice of God would come through
and blind everyone in the ark, bouncing against the sides
until it found its way back out to hover over the water.
At a certain point, this all became unbearable: the light,
the raven and the dove, his sons, their wives, and the sense that the sea outside
was boiling. And so he flung the stone into the water.
And so when Noah let all the birds go Noah was letting Noah go.
He flew out of his own tsohar away from his wife and his ark.
Away from all the people who died because he did not save them.
Away from the years lost to rain and slumber.
You will want to know what happened before the afterword.
One-third of Noah never returned, one-third of Noah came back drunk
and one-third of Noah came back with his mouth closed around a miracle.
This is the story of Noah.

My Desire for the Supermodel vs. My Desire for the 50-Year-Old Expert on Arcane Languages

It's a lonely life mostly. The exceptions are, well,
exceptions. I could make myself cry but I think
it's the onions.
I try to make a home environment where you can both
sit with me.
Sit next to me.
I live in the white part of town.
All the pictures on my walls are of white people.
There is a place where we close ourselves off to each other.
You, sweet Kate, are no rock star.
Just a green shoot piercing my heart from the inside.
And you, Mr. Wolf, your eyes hold a pooled
liquid which I want to make spill over.
Every city is lonely at night.
The country also. Lonely at night.
I followed that loneliness into the corner of my hipbones.
Got down on my knees and fed it little bits of pastry.
Sweet Jesus, I am almost
as old as my own grandmother.
I am on my knees, shoving bits of pastry
up my cunt.
Thank you God for that word, cunt.
Or perhaps I should say thank you cunt for that word, God.
They are both wrapped around my finger.
Let me know if you need directions to my house.

Eve Packer

Express DVD Video Palace Sex Sex Sex

do girls come in here
he nods, all kindsa girls

they rent? we dont rent
he says, buy only

Buns & Roses
sale \$5.95

He Said She Said Employ My Pussy
Ass-A-Thon Fruit Squeezin & Ass Fuckin

you cant write it down
he says

the doors open i say
its legal

i dont know the legal,
legs up crossword puzzle on lap,

fixing red baseball cap,
i don't know the legal

but you cant write it down

Juda Bennett

Throwing Glitter Into a Riot: June 27, 1969

And so we planned for it,
grooming our hair to deliver,
a bouffant, an afro

for the cameras, for newspapers, for days,
we danced like Vegas
showgirls, Busby Berkley troupes, a stunning choreography

of sharp elbows. And beer bottles
flew like sequins in the light. Plus one brick or two—
but not from me.

There was this dancer, name of Sam,
drag queen of the first order,
no training, except the streets

unlike any white chick
I'd ever seen, and I'd seen some living the life,
if you know what I mean,

but these days no one does, because for me the world
exploded, left me surrounded with
so many Izod Shirts asking about Stonewall

until my life began spiralling out
from this one moment, weighted as it was
with brick, and, yes,

I did throw one or two, if you must know, but the bottles
were like sequins
and that's much nicer. And I do want to tell it nice.

On Being Notorious

In one study the voice, not the hypothalamus, lead the scientists to find me in Dusseldorf.

Quite cold that winter, I come back listening for Helmut in the throat, gutturals cleaving to tongue.

No luck. Fingers, in another report, reveal proclivities in ridges and whorls. One prominent doctor,

Canadian, states gay men form patterns like this. He takes a set of prints, disappears.

"The ink, Dear Sir, remains a shadowy skin. Please advise." Everyday, my palm is placed upon the news,

everyday it climbs through. When the butcher wraps today's meat, folds my face around tonight's supper.

Nava EtShalom

Uncoupling

I woke up from marrying my father;
the window let in a little bit of streetlamp.

None of us knew what time it was.
The streetlamp thought three. The boy

thought morning, and started to wake.
I laughed. We returned to sleep slowly,

mouth to ear, and the marriages continued.

///

I was writing a poem when a boy blew up
and my fingers stopped on "matching boots."

Nobody has company now; what's one
lost body that was warm in my bed,

quilting a night of bad weddings?

///

It would be a fine poem that opened
the sickroom ceiling, or flowered

the house of mourning, so sweet
my throat caught, or so sharp

the painting peeled out of its frame.
I'd be the thief, taking it home

to the cracked tree-house wall, tacking
only paper to block the wind.

///

I try to stay in sleep
where there is at least my body.

My temporary teeth, his small hands,
an argument, a draft.

Waking I say I must
have imagined the weddings.

There are no boys left
in America anyway.

Christopher Davis

Contra

Behind our abandoned national museum,
brown fingers impress a sill's rough clay
edge. Bits of green glass nip his palms.

Many overweight American teenagers
once ran riot through those shadowy
rooms, laughing at strong sculpture.

We rake grains across flaming pavement
on Dry Day, unafraid, praying the State
can fire on careless cars from biplanes.

A rose, sticking out of his black back pack,
bobbing, he sure would love to take a hike
but popcorn peckers moan around his toes.

One legless loser, half-hobbling, half-
flapping, can't get closer, ever, can't
compete, ripped-off life the endless

end of a quick instant, fate's bite, fast trap.
He who fucked in corn, daisies, rain-wet,
stomps, scaring a blossom into hot light.

Down Low

The black stud, cruising, hates me and my race.
He hunches in the steam room's shadows, glares
like a panther at my expensive flab.

My anxious stare embarrassed him. He gets
to shove me back: aging, I'm defenseless.
Imagination is decaying sense:

lash me to your ant-hill, Zulu love god!
Big, proud, double-you double-you dot org,
no bacon strip of brown on tight white shorts,

you're in your in, now take revenge, humble
Humpty, my fragile shell cracking, crumbling,
my flaccid tongue exactly unlike yours,

right, shower water hotter over there,
nature stronger than law. Our skin's not fair.

Aaron Smith

Diesel Clothing Ad (Naked Man with Messenger Bag)

So what if the woman's hand reaching
for the bag pulls the bag

back and we see his dick,

that one ball hangs lower
than the other, that he shaves them.

So what. So what

if he likes her hand near
his dick and gets hard and we see

that, see his red-tipped
dick taken in her fist

and her red-tipped
fingers gripping,
pulling: a hungry

dick in a hungry fist without
faces. So what if we do see

her face and his face and can tell
by his rolled-back eyes, her half-closed
eyes, that he wants her

to take him
in her mouth
and she wants to take him

and does, and we see that, too. So what.

So what if she's your daughter,
and he's somebody's son

and they like this sucking.
His hips jamming. Her head
nodding. Her throat

the hard red end of it.

And they like it. Both
of them. Both of them

like it. So what.

The Earth Spins Toward Oblivion While We Ride Trains

We all crowd in to stare at each other
and to read our free newspapers
and to nod in our headphones

the way those who can't get enough of Jesus
nod when they're told more about Jesus.

Our socks fall down in our boots
our underwear twists up our butts
and needs fixing.

A man in jeans says something
to a man in dress pants about *the game*.

Dress Pants (who is white) says the Jets kicked ass
and because he wants Jeans (who is black) to understand
he hands him his newspaper
and they are both resplendent with connection.

They could have just been kissed!
They have that kind of look on their faces!

Jeans starts to read about the game-that-kicked-ass
and Dress Pants spreads his legs to scratch.

Against the door Receding Hairline hides his erection
and Too Much Jewelry smells her finger.
Talking across me High Heeled Boots
tells Last Year's Hair about that

sorry sonofabitch she's living with.
She swears she can't go on like this.
Not for one more fucking second.

Lee Upton

Politics for Lovers

What are your politics to me, he asked,
but something spat upon by pirates?
You're the type, she said,
who could make a net
but forget the string:
You must be an authority on something.
Was it George Sand who angered a man
when she scribbled by firelight
and left him tossing in the sheets?
We used to say it's all been said,
but that was before we became naïve.
If I was on a plate, she said,
and draped with electric beads
and a neon anemone,
would you see me, or the plate?
It would depend, he said, on whether or not
I had dinner;
even a nihilist likes to eat.

Anthony Robinson

from Aviary Evacuation Plan or 81 Poems Project

*

In the clouds over Europe a girl is afflicted:
Weltschmerz, Schadenfreude & other German things.

In the clouds over Asia a girl is unwound
"you're wasted on me"

Coming down the mountain, w/Nick on the side
wondering about the "perfect life" I look

to beautiful people (Nick all in paisley) as models
for my own less than perfect union a girl says something

something I can't remember something about a circle, a sun

[3/26/06]

*

I have new theories to share with you but I can't
share them just yet. if you consider political tragedy

can't share them just now "if you consider the radiance,"

go pay bills & get some pills & some food & die,
figure yourself out & feed the cat & the evening

stretched out like a tabby on the table, I can't share right now.

"Rough magic" & all that entails heart cracked apart
read this eat this it is good eat of this tree & you shall not die

this is my theory: we are still alive (but I cannot share this)

[3/31/06]

*

Brief weather & I guess a sort of vision mid-April
morning destroyed gnats swarm

Teeming with illegals, my blood comes to you
 & begs & makes crooked deals

All night the crying & all morning sleep forgets
us there distant from lives we thought

about living in America, everyone is gay!
flowers never sleep the secrets I was keeping

from you were not of other loves, but of you & you.

[4/7/06]

*

"Cut your Belgian hare!! in pieces" (Toklas 253) thumbing
a book on Thursday, sweet & for Jesus sweet & for me Our Friday

's only middling but wine is free & bread is still bread
& Sunday we eat roasted bunny (w/ bourbon & beer)

amongst our pagan pals an egg, too, is a symbol
& I want a guide to North American Organic Flying Machines

& to write a poem by Aaron Belz entitled
"Geeses Are Suck." They're sometimes Canadian, for one thing

& they are not Christian & they probably would crucify Our Lord.

[4/12/06]

*

Same day helpless same day alone. Women of mystery & finery left
The apartment (but not until they feng shuied the fuck out of it)

Do not try any of these feats ever. Cultivate, instead, a healthy
& sincere appreciation for unresolved issues. Solve for "x"

Solve for sex. Work for sex. In the end, I hope it comes down
To more than coming. Down, I'm not so sure. It's been weeks

Since I felt normal. My woman gave me an ultimatum—that's number 2.

The hell out the front room window never looked so bright.

April—sunny. Clouds, the fluffy white kind. Me—still awake.

[4/18/06]

*

Joe said "lisp[ing] weasel bitch" Texas makes a man
as mean as a snake. Or so I'm told.

Some fine bits hover near the wash hanging
Texas makes a man hanging

We'd kill a few if we could. "lazy snaky fuck"
Never eager to anger, never easy to enrage, it may be Your Time

Inhale deeply. Splash paint in the general direction of those
you can no longer stand. Stand back. Back up. Up yours.

This, Lord, is just about as much as we can break. Up yours.

[4/20/06]

*

Hymn for our battle-scarred body of synth/of starling
Brother, brother "we don't need to escalate"
Every day is another day without dying/with more dying

Patricide Our America is blighted & crinkly-gorgeous
This, our dry drunk empire, this our scorched & palsied canticle
I place a rooster here, near the fox. Strum, strum. Piece

of shit. Piece of cake. Doxology of the deserted. this, here.
The book of common prayer, mother, mother. here, this.
Can you glue back what Caesar has rended. Do you want to?

[4/20/06]

*

We can be heroes we can all be leaders we can be Prosperos
& abjure. If we burn all the books they will come.

Your banshee, my windswept.

Door open, small breeze works in. Two flavors of tulip on the stoop.
In my torn white shirt and semi-chaste loins, I pretend to be Gregor Mendel.

More people died today. Some were exploded all up.

The earth can take what we deal out; we, however, probably can't.
Robinson, you're a whiner. I'm supposed to rhyme, but I can't.

More people died today. Your desert, your windswept, your great pretend.

Michael Lally

The Geese Don't Fly South

The geese don't fly South
in Winter any more.
Only Latvia is worse than the U.S.
in rates of infant mortality
among the so-called industrial nations.
Where have all the
protestors gone?
I've tried to be a
birder but
they never conform
to the photos and
drawings in the guides
I've bought, including
Sibley's. That
hasn't stopped me
from loving them.
I have often fallen
hardest in love
with those whose
names I never knew.
My Jersey Irish relatives
all live in the South now,
where homes are cheaper
and taxes almost nonexistent.
The red state is where all
our tax money goes,
to prop up cheaper lifestyles.
It's where all the divorces
seem to be too, liberal
Massachusettes having
the lowest rate of divorce.
Or did I mean blue?
I always get confused about
who's who. I don't
mean the book, I've
been in that for years.
But so has Bush.
All the Bushes I suppose.
Let's face it, you can
get away with murder
if you're family always
has. Has yours?

No, I didn't think so.
Or maybe I mean if
your family always
has because of its
position—power and
money, and maybe
couldn't anymore if
those things were removed.
There's cranes and egrets,
swans and mallards, as well
as the various blackbirds
sprinkled all through the
Jersey meadowlands that
once stunk so strongly
my father swore breathing
the air there was a known cure
for asthma, of which
there is so much more now
than when I was a boy and
he was still around. The ground
on which we stand is shifting,
as perhaps it always was, but
now we can't deny it.
The South did rise again.
Trees are more common
in the Northeast now than
they were when I was a boy,
despite the blights and infectious
insects invading from the South.
The tundra is melting so drastically,
houses in Alaska have begun to tilt
like mini-towers of Pisa.
Pizza was an American invention.
Although when I was a boy
there was a kind of loaf of bread
you could buy from the local
Italian immigrants, round and
flatter than most loaves of bread,
that the Italians called Pisa bread.
Two guys who grew up across
the street from me were nicknamed
Loaf and Half-a-Loaf.
When I returned to live in Jersey
after forty years away,
before the last of my siblings still here,
an ex-cop, moved to Georgia,

he asked me after we left the local A&P
if I'd noticed the rotund old Italian man
who nodded to him at the checkout line,
and when I said I had, he said,
"Know who that was?"
I didn't, so he told me: "Half-a-loaf".
Bluebirds have come back to New England.
I wonder about the white cliffs of Dover.
Thank God for Turner Classic Movies.
Where have all the heroes gone?
I know the servicemen and women
and firemen and women and other
public servants have done heroic deeds,
I meant in the movies. And politics.
The Bogies and the Robert Kennedys,
the Jimmy Cagneys and the Roosevelts,
the Waynes and the Washingtons,
despite their politics,
and Coopers, Jeffersons, Stewarts and
Doctor Kings—Rosa Parks,
Barbara Stanwyks and Joans of Arc,
Queen Maeves and Jean Arthurs
and Mother Joneses.
The Bush family tree, the Walker and
Bush ancestry, have always been
expert at exploiting the systems
of American politics and business
to their advantage and especially
the disadvantage of others,
coming out ahead even when
the rest of us are begging
for a scrap of bread from
the tables they control.
How whole can you be
when you can't see anything
other than your own perspective?
How wrong were we as kids
to think our romantic nostalgia
for revolutions past could
pass the test of our time.
Will it matter when the climate
changes so severely, everyone
we know might end up
destitute like those Katrina
victims who missed the boat,
literally. And what has

literature wrought? Remember
the heroes of Sir Walter Scott?
But that was boyhood heroics.
As a young man it was the
heroes and heroines of
Joyce or Toomer or Rhys.
Certainly no heroes
or heroines in the conventional
sense. Like my
current taste for
the war journalism of
Martha Gellhorn. What
could be more courageous
than her writing? Her life,
I'd say. With all her war
reporting from the front
or near enough to bear
the brunt of bombs and
manmade disaster. And
all her exes,
yet alone in the end.
Or Lee Miller's
commitment to *her* life as
her true masterpiece. Or
should that be *mistresspiece*?
The language fails us now. Orwell
was right, about some things.
"Oh well" is what they wrote
under my high school yearbook
photo as my favorite expression.
Oh well infuckingdeed.

Terence Winch

The Right to Remain Silent

We are part of a ridiculous plan.
The outcome is unknown. Teenagers are allowed
opportunities to experience divinity.
Wives are self-contained. Husbands must
argue with plumbers and dentists.

The new constitution constructs a wall
between the dream world of chilling
get-togethers with your scary next-door
neighbor and the cold light of day in which
angry subway riders give each other the finger.

Peace is divided into three parts:
chance, space, and music.
You may make use
of transformative technologies
after speaking at three AA meetings.
People who own beach houses must take jobs
at insane asylums. They are not permitted
to move to California. Nor is anyone from California
allowed to come here. They had their chance.

Treaties

Tension are easing.
Delivery men are relaxing.
Old people are clad in purple now,
windows are open in the countryside,
planes are being refueled,
virus writers are twisting
in the peril of new infections.
Funk sings out again.

Victors pass the torch like lovers
on a roof in Vancouver. Passion lives here,
as it does in Finland, France, and China,
where smoke is red and seconds
streak across the sky like hours.

I was a teenager in a red Ford back then
heading to the mountains with my brothers.
They were angry at me, probably.
They forgave me. I forgave them.
We ran out of gas, and I stayed with the car.
When the police came, I played the fool.

I had a nightmare about the apocalypse.
I rode a blind horse naked into the kitchen.
Then I heard the birds all singing at once
when we had to jump-start the car.

Bernadette Mayer

In America

so far most of us
don't have to go to jail for long
or be killed for our beliefs yet

I remember when a crazed nun in fifth grade
during the mccarthy era said to us
how many of you would die for your faith
if the communists came, raise your hands

of course we all did
now it's different
this is a sonnet

people are astonished if a poet
in america can live long & not be destroyed

it makes no sense to anyone, none of this
all of us are all wrong.

Muriel Rukeyser

In Our Time

In our period, they say there is free speech.
They say there is no penalty for poets,
There is no penalty for writing poems.
They say this. This is the penalty.

Contributors

PAIGE ACKERSON-KIELY lives with her family in Lincoln, Vermont, in a small '70s-style Chalet originally intended as a deer hunting camp. Recent work has appeared in *jubilat*, *Ninth Letter*, and *Pleiades*. Her first book, *In No One's Land*, was the winner of the 2006 Sawtooth Prize, and will be published by Ahsakta Press in January 2007. The political cause she is most adamant about is loving who you want to love.

LIZ AHL lives in Bridgewater, New Hampshire. Her poems have appeared recently or are forthcoming in *5AM*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Four Corners*, *The Women's Review of Books*, and *Margie*. She is passionate about abolishing the death penalty.

NIN ANDREWS's books include *The Book of Orgasms*, *Why They Grow Wings*, and *Midlife Crisis with Dick and Jane*. *Sleeping with Houdini* is forthcoming from BOA Editions. "The issue I am most passionate about—getting rid of George Bush. I continue to be appalled by the methodical and deceitful manner in which George Bush operates. Whatever your issue is, the problem is the lack of integrity of the Bush administration. I suppose anyone with a heart and brain would agree with me on that. To answer the question literally: The environment is my primary issue. I am on the advisory board of the Union of Concerned Scientists and am active in several other environmental organizations."

CYNTHIA ARRIEU-KING is currently a doctoral student at the University of Cincinnati and an echocardiographer. Her work has or will appear this year in *Word For/Word*, *No Tell Motel*, *Diagram*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Hotel Amerika*, and *Pilot Poetry*. She feels passionately about helping young people express their own opinions in a persuasive, logical fashion. She also cares about all the work done by organizations like Doctors Without Borders.

DAVID BARATIER's poems recently appeared in *Laurel Review*, *Slipstream*, *Fulcrum*, and *Controlled Burn*. His anthology appearances include *American Poetry: the Next Generation*, *Clockpunchers*, and *Red White and Blues*. Collections include: *A Run of Letters*, (Poetry New York Press); *The Fall Of Because*, (Pudding House); and an epistolary and prose novel *In It What's in It, Spuyten Duyvil*. "As for a political cause, mine is one of basic human rights. After 175 years of legislation American Indian prisoners are still denied the daily connection to basic spiritual practices and other important cultural items such as access to, or use of, eagle feathers, traditional foods, sacred pipes, certain herbs, and use of religious facilities including sweat lodges and teepees."

AARON BELZ lives in St. Louis, Missouri, where he teaches English, publishes Observable Books (<http://observable.org>), and curates a reading series by the same name. His poems have recently appeared in *St. Louis Magazine*, *No Tell Motel*, *Drunken Boat*, and *Black Clock*. A lover of community, he is insanely passionate about the eminent domain issue. (Damn you, city council!) He also hates the big businesses that have wiped out his favorite independent shops. (Die, Home Depot! Go back from whence you came, Sam's!)

JUDA BENNETT was a member of three hippie communes from 1973-1990 before dropping back into society and becoming an academic. His poetry has appeared in *Puerto del Sol*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Laurel Review*, and other journals. He is an Associate Professor at The College of New Jersey. Of his many favorite political causes, his partner of fourteen years would like him to mention gay marriage.

JAMES BROCK's most recent book of poetry is *Pictures That Got Small*, published by WordTech Editions. "I live in Fort Myers, Florida where I am active in local environmental politics, especially in protecting the Caloosahatchee River and the Peace River Estuaries. I am a first amendment radical—that's how I nurture my inner Libertarian."

MATTHEW BROGAN's poems have appeared in *Antioch Review*, *Columbia*, *Denver Quarterly*, *International Poetry Review*, *Verse*, *ZYZZYVA*, and other magazines. He lives in Brooklyn. "The cause I am most actively involved in is the fight about anti-intellectualism, but few see that as a political struggle; my gravest concern at the moment is the resurgence of religion around the world. For what it is worth, I might add that the question itself makes me uneasy. If there is a problem with "political poetry," it is that it is often seen as synonymous with "protest poetry" or "advocacy poetry." There are some great poems of political outrage or triumph, but I'm more interested in poets like T.S. Eliot, Edmund Jabes, and Zbigniew Herbert, who wrote poems that engage philosophy, history, economics, social and cultural criticism, and politics."

KURT BROWN's poems have appeared in many literary periodicals, and he is the editor of several anthologies including *Blues for Bill*, for the late William Matthews, from University of Akron Press and his newest (with Harold Schechter), *Conversation Pieces: Poems that Talk to Other Poems* from Alfred A. Knopf, Everyman's Library Pocket Poets Series. His collections of poetry include *Return of the Prodigals*, *More Things in Heaven and Earth*, both from Four Way Books, and two new collections, *Future Ship* and *From Here*, due out from Red Hen Press in 2007 and 2008 respectively. "As for political issues: it is difficult for anyone today to know where to start. It could be widespread corruption in government; illegal and immoral war; the assault on our Constitution; religious extremism; the resurgence of racism; corporate scandal; the failure of our educational system; or health care system; or tax system; mass delusion; the new fascism (which is the old fascism warmed over); ignorance, poverty, disease; and of course ecological degradation, which includes global warming—and which will eventually effect us all. Writing poems seems hopeless in the face of all that. But, as Muriel Rukeyser once said: 'If we don't speak, who will?' Silence is not only the greatest political sin, it is a great artistic sin as well."

JENNY BROWNE lives in San Antonio, Texas, and is the author of a chapbook, *Glass* (Pecan Grove, 2000), and a book-book *At Once* (University of Tampa 2003). Recent work has been published or is forthcoming in *Swink*, *Sentence*, *The Florida Review*, and the anthologies *More Texas Skies* and *The Bedside Guide to No Tell Motel*. "Before moving to Texas, I didn't think much about the death penalty because I didn't have to. Now, there is a photograph in my morning paper nearly every week, the face of someone that my state has just killed. This war we're in continues to prove that murdering innocent people is no way to end violence. I don't believe murdering guilty people is either."

CULLEN BAILEY BURNS lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, teaches at Century College, and has published poems recently in *The Denver Quarterly*, *Rattle*, and *Rhino*. A book, *Paper Boat*, was published in 2003 by New Rivers Press. "I believe that the political is personal, the personal political. Now that we are several years into war, I find the rhetoric of aggression permeates my own speech and writing, permeates my home in ways I find appalling. Our country cannot be at war without each of us being part of the war, no matter how distant the violence sometimes seems to us."

JEFF CALARESO lives in San Francisco, California. His poems have recently appeared in *The Dos Passos Review*, *Oracle*, and *Barbaric Yawp*. He is an ardent pacifist.

CLAUDIA CARLSON lives in Manhattan. Her first book, *The Elephant House*, will be published by Marsh Hawk Press in 2007. "I never stop being surprised by religious intolerance, from atheists to zealots."

ROBIN CHAPMAN's poems have appeared recently in *Appalachia*, *OnEarth*, and *Ascent*. Her most recent collection, *Images of a Complex World: The Art and Poetry of Chaos* (a collaboration with the fractal art of physicist J.C. Sprott), won the Posner Poetry Award. She is co-founder, with her backyard neighbor artist Russell Gardner, of the Epidemic Peace Imagery exhibit (hoping the idea will spread!), a collection of over 300 works of peace poetry and art framed to the same 12 x 16 inch size that has been traveling in Wisconsin and other states for the last four years.

BRENDA COULTAS is the author of *A Lonely Cemetery* and *The Abolition Journal*, forthcoming from Coffee House Press in 2007. "I am most committed to social justice and peace for all people of the world."

N COURTRIGHT, an Ohio native, currently resides in Austin, Texas. In his spare time, he teaches thinking to eighteen-year-olds at Texas State University, where he is a lover of good sense far more than of any political party. His work has most recently appeared in *Caketrain*, *Phoebe*, *Diagram*, *Zone 3*, *Astropoetica*, and *The Pebble Lake Review*, among others.

GREGORY CROSBY spent his formative years in Las Vegas, Nevada, where for more than a decade he was an art critic and cultural commentator. His poems have appeared in several journals, including *The South Carolina Review*, *The Red Rock Review*, *Stirring*, and *atomicpetals*. He is currently pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing at the City College of New York, where he most recently won the Marie Ponsot Poetry Prize. "I suppose the political cause I'm most passionate about is the fond hope that America's imperial ambitions are humbled to the point that American exceptionalism is a dead letter and we can become a normal nation. . . . which is rather like wishing it was 1945 and we were England, hungry to vote for Clement Attlee. A foolish cause indeed."

P. SCOTT CUNNINGHAM is a graduate student in the MFA program at Florida International University. His poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Tigertail: A South Florida Poetry Annual*, *Cider Press Review*, and *McSweeney's*. He lives in Miami Beach, Florida, and yes, he really did carry Johnny Cash's luggage. It was black.

“Political Issue du jour: We need to stop exporting military training to developing countries. It doesn’t make any sense to me that we spend billions of dollars in an effort to create an unbeatable defense force and then immediately give away all of our technology and methods to any rag-tag group that only temporarily and tangentially represents our interests. If we were really determined to maintain peace, we’d stop democratically distributing all of the war toys.”

CHRISTOPHER DAVIS teaches creative writing at UNC Charlotte. His third collection of poetry, *A History of the Only War*, was published in 2005 by Four Way Books. Newer poems have appeared recently in *Crazyhorse*, *Interim*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Colorado Review*, *The Journal*, and *Passages North*. “I read the paper every day and have lots of thoughts and feelings about the large-scale political disasters of our moment, but this generic citizenly engagement does not directly enter, as subject matter, into my poetry; there, it seems, my muse wants to hear voices, performing for imagined others or speaking as if alone, as if what’s most interesting and important are the ways our individual bodies and minds experience life. But maybe ‘the particular is political’—it seems ignorance of others, or callousness to others when there is knowledge, is a factor in much of the current violence.”

MARY DENARDO is a writer living in San Francisco, California. She received her MFA in Creative Writing at San Francisco State University. Her work can be found in *ZYZZYVA*, *Indiana Review*, *The San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, *Parthenon West Review*, *Mirage Period(ical)*, *LTTR #2*, *Fourteen Hills*, and *EM Literary*. She is a creative writing teacher invested in engaging adults in art and writing and, therefore, possibilities for change in themselves and the world.

DARCIE DENNIGAN grew up in Rhode Island and currently lives in Los Angeles, California. Her poems have been most recently published or are forthcoming in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *Forklift Ohio*, and *The Indiana Review*. “Political cause? There are lots of issues I care about, though in the end I’m not sure the right word for them is political—I’m not sure they’re issues that belong solely in the government’s arena. Whether domestic issues like homelessness, or foreign policy ones like supporting terrorist regimes with oil investments—or global ones, like the environment—I don’t think we should rely on the government to solve all our problems. I think we all need to educate ourselves, make sacrifices, and volunteer in our communities. To be really probably overly basic, I worry how I and everyone else can have more empathy for people unlike us, and more imagination to see how our daily choices might affect the world. Or, if that’s not appropriate for the Dossier, you could also say that one clear-cut political cause I’m passionate about is Al Gore for President, as soon as possible.”

ANDREA DULANTO is a Latina, lesbian writer, currently living in Miami, Florida, and pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing at Florida International University. Her political causes include women’s issues as well as LGBT rights. She has been published in *Tigertail: A South Florida Poetry Annual*.

JOSHUA EDWARDS divides his time between Ann Arbor, Oaxaca, and Chicago. His poems have recently appeared in *Vanitas*, *Crowd*, *LIT*, *Practice*, *The New Review*, and elsewhere. He thinks medicine and basic health care should be available to everyone in the world.

ELAINE EQUI's books include *Voice-Over*, which won the San Francisco State Poetry Award, and *The Cloud of Knowable Things*. *Ripple Effect: New & Selected Poems* is forthcoming in 2007 from Coffee House Press. She teaches in the MFA Programs at The New School and City College of New York. About "Perversely Patriotic" she writes: "As you might guess from my poem, I'm not a big fan of the news. What is equally as horrifying as the events themselves are the way they're reported. I guess you'd say my cause would be helping to create an alternative media."

MICHAEL ESTES received an MFA from the University of Notre Dame and lives and writes in Fort Collins, Colorado. Politically speaking, he's most passionate about the power of individuals to effect change. He's also frightened by big-box stores.

NAVA ETSHALOM lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she is a 2006-2007 Pew Fellow in the Arts. Her work has appeared recently in *Mid-American Review* and *Vespertine Press*. In 2004, she received her in Creative Writing for Social Change at Oberlin College, where she received the Academy of American Poets Stuart Frieberg Prize. She is committed to working for justice in multiple ways, addressing interconnected systems of language, violence, identity, and money. Recently, that has meant acting to stop U.S. aid to Israel, which outfits the ongoing occupation of Palestinian lives and land as well as the 2006 bombing of Lebanon. She also co-produces *Queerspawn Diaries* (queerspawn.org), a radio documentary about adults from queer and transgender families.

CJ EVANS's poetry has recently appeared, or is forthcoming, in *Arts & Letters*, *Gulf Coast*, *Mid-American Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and elsewhere. He lives in New York City. While he is kept awake at night by the Iraq War, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and the scaling back of civil liberties, he is also highly concerned by minimum-mandatory sentencing, the reduction in social programming, and the continued devaluation of education, which have helped create a costly prison structure based on long-term punishment rather than rehabilitation and recidivism-reduction.

PETER GRIECO lives and works in Buffalo, New York, where he teaches freshman writing at Buffalo State College. "Some of my poetry reflects my experience living and teaching in Turkey and Korea. Other poems respond to my experience in my hometown, Buffalo, where I've lived most of my life and where I studied in the poetics program at SUNY Buffalo. This year I've had poems published in *House Organ*, *Poetalk*, and *Bear Creek Haiku*. I wrote this and my other two submissions in response to messages sent by a family member informing us of his early impressions in his new diplomatic posting to Baghdad. I support him, but not his decision to serve in Iraq. The nation was railroaded into the war. We bear responsibility for our government's misdoing. Take the troops home. Offer as much humanitarian assistance as is requested. One of the things that interests me about the persona of the speaker in 'Baghdad Bound' is the visible cracks in the armour of the military style bravado he must buy into."

JAMES GRINWIS lives in Massachusetts. His work has appeared in *APR*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Conjunctions*, *Quick Fiction*, *Sverve*, *New Orleans Review*, and elsewhere. "So many things politically to be passionate about these days.

Corruption, however you want to define it, in all forms bothers me. Dogma is troubling. What is happening environmentally bothers me. The fact that the daily news report has to be sickening all the time."

TERRANCE HAYES is the author of three collections, including most recently, *Wind in a Box* (Penguin 2006). He is a Professor of Creative Writing at Carnegie Mellon University and lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with his family. War and male politics have left him passionately depressed. Poetry is his prozac.

KELLE GROOM's poems have appeared most recently in *DoubleTake/Points of Entry*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, and *Witness*. Her second collection, *Luckily*, was the 2006 Florida Poetry Series selection (Anhinga Press). She works for Atlantic Center for the Arts and lives in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. The political causes that most interest her are anti-war, as well as shelter and services for those who are homeless, and affordable housing.

JIBADE-KHALIL HUFFMAN's fiction and poetry have appeared in *NOON*, *Bat City Review*, and *Aufgabe*. He is at work on a novel and a book-length poem about foreign cinema. He is passionate about women's reproductive rights.

LARRY JANOWSKI is a Chicago poet whose work has appeared in journals like *TriQuarterly*, *Rhino*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and *After Hours: a Journal of Chicago Writing and Art*. He teaches at Dominican University and Wright Community College, and his first full length book of poetry, *BrotherKeeper*, is forthcoming from PuddinHead Press. He is a Franciscan friar. Political cause: the elimination of racial, gender, and sexual orientation bias.

LESLEY JENIKE is a PhD student at the University of Cincinnati. Her poems have most recently appeared in *Gulf Coast*, *Washington Square*, and *Blackbird*, and will appear soon in *POOL*, *Verse*, and *Hotel Amerika*. Her chapbook won Permafrost's 2006 Susan Blalock Competition. "Hurricane Katrina seemed to illuminate our country's institutionalized racism on a horrifically grand scale. Cincinnati (my hometown) has felt its insidious grip for years now and it appears the situation is worsening. I'm passionate about encouraging (through my writing and teaching) an open and constructive conversation between our various communities so the city and country I love are not destroyed by ignorance."

GEORGE KALAMARAS is the author of five books of poetry, three of which are full-length, *Even the Java Sparrows Call Your Hair* (Quale Press, 2004), *Borders My Bent Toward* (Pavement Saw Press, 2003), and *The Theory and Function of Mangoes* (Four Way Books, 2000), winner of the Four Way Books Intro Series. He is Professor of English at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, where he has taught since 1990. A vegetarian for 26 years so far, he is most passionate about animal rights, particularly the reintroduction of the Wolf into areas of its previous habitat.

ARIANA-SOPHIA KARTSONIS is completing a PhD at the University of Cincinnati. Her collection, *Intaglio*, was awarded the 2005 Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Prize and is forthcoming (a few short days away from this writing!) from KSU Press. "Politically, I am kind of wrung-out, sad, afraid in the largest way. That aside, I have always been concerned with the rights of animals, particularly the good, concrete work of Alley Cat Allies."

BRIAN KLOPPENBERG lives in New York City, where he works as a psychoanalyst and a teacher of the Alexander Technique. His work was recently featured in *LIT*. "In various ways, I have worked to make the world safer for people who express their sexualities and genders beyond what passes for 'mainstream'."

PHYLLIS KOESTENBAUM lives in Sunnyvale, California, and is a senior scholar at Stanford's Institute for Research on Women & Gender. Her essay, "The Secret Climate the Year I Stopped Writing," is forthcoming from *The Massachusetts Review*. "Without the women's movement, I wouldn't have become a poet."

ANDREW KOZMA attends the University of Houston for a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing while working as a non-fiction editor for *Gulf Coast*. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Alehouse*, *Pebble Lake Review*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *Backwards City Review*, *Forklift*, *Ohio*, *Blue Mesa*, and *Best New Poets 2006*. He recently won the Zone 3 First Book Award for his manuscript "City of Regret." "The political cause I'm most interested in is the freedom of personal choice in an individual's lifestyle and how totalitarian governments (or those acting totalitarian in short spurts) clamp down on 'fringe' behaviors that aren't conducive to what the government believes or supports. Not only do these usually small and underpowered groups get silenced, but the silence enforced from the top level encourages all other people to become more circumspect in what they say and do, for fear that their lives and livelihood will be affected."

DAVID KRESH was born in New York in 1940. He lives in Washington, D.C. with the two youngest of his four children. He was, until recently, Reference Specialist in Poetry at the Library of Congress, and he is the Poet in Residence at Capitol Hill Day School. His poems have appeared in dozens of magazines and anthologies, and in two small books, *Bloody Joy: Love Poems*, and *Sketches After "Pete's Beer"*. Another book, *Turn Off or Use Opener*, winner of the 2005 Carlyle Prize, is forthcoming from Blue House Press.

JUDITH KROLL's poems have appeared in many journals and magazines; she has published two collections of poems: *In The Temperate Zone* (Scribners) and *Our Elephant & That Child* (Quarterly Review Poetry Series). She received her BA from Smith College and her PhD from Yale University. *Chapters in a Mythology: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath* was published in 1976 (Harper & Row), the first full-length critical book on Plath. A UK edition is due out this year. Kroll has also done collaborative translations from the Kannada, a South Indian language (she lived in India for many years), including the novel *Bhava*, by U.R. Anantha Murthy (Penguin India). Currently she is working on "The Beheaded," a booklength manuscript of lyric essays connected with India, and "Borrowed Gods," a third collection of poems. She teaches poetry writing at the University of Texas at Austin. The political cause she is most passionate about is the restoration of truly representative government in America.

MICHAEL LALLY writes: "I've been back living in New Jersey for the past seven years, after forty years elsewhere. My latest publication is a new edition of a long poem, 'March 18, 2003,' published by Charta in cooperation with Libellum and including six new drawings by Alex Katz. It's my twenty-seventh book. The poem was written for a reading the night before the invasion of Iraq and in protest of that

invasion and subsequent war. My opposition to that war and to the Bush regime is my main cause these days, though there's plenty of other situations that I'm equally passionate about, including the situation in the Congo, the Sudan, Somalia, Palestine and now Lebanon, the position of women in all those places and many more, especially throughout the Arab world and, though it has been relatively calm recently, the continuing impasse between the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland."

JOAN LARKIN is the author of *My Body: New and Selected Poems*, out in 2007 from Hanging Loose Press. She teaches poetry writing in the MFA program at New England College and is currently Poet in Residence at Columbia College Chicago. "My passion for the freedom to speak is the basis for my passion for poetry. We're writing in a time of greed and violence, in the heart of an empire that perpetuates war, torture, destruction of the planet, official lies and hypocrisy, and—nothing new—contempt for women, children, people without power. Amid such darkness, the freedom and courage to say what we know to be true, whatever that may be, strikes me as the essence of moral strength and human dignity."

SARAH LILIUS lives in Fairfax, Virginia, where she is completing a MFA in poetry at George Mason University. Recent publications include *The Denver Quarterly*, *Heartlands*, and *The Marlboro Review*. She is most passionate about women's rights.

MATT LOMBARDI's poetry and prose have appeared in *Details* magazine, *Forklift Ohio*, and *Eye For An Iris*. He is currently working toward an MFA in Creative Writing at the New School while living in Brooklyn. He is most passionate about improving the sorry state of the American education system.

SHANE McCRAE received an MFA from the Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa in the spring of 2004, and he is currently a student at Harvard Law School. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Image*, *Colorado Review*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Good Foot*, and others. He lives in Cambridge with his wife and son. "In the United States, home of the 'one-drop' rule, Blackness is at least as political as it is biological. Self-awareness is other-awareness—it is awareness of both the otherness of the self and of the majority race. For mulattos, like me, these two kinds of otherness often get mixed-up. One is never certain which kind of otherness is one's own—or rather, one is always aware that neither kind of otherness is completely one's own. To say that one has no otherness can be the same as saying one has no self. Though I become every day more concerned about the wars we are fighting abroad—the wars by which we are defining ourselves in this new century—this concern has only heightened my sense of the wars we are fighting at home."

ROBERT McDONALD lives in tatty coach house Chicago, and works at an independent bookstore. His poetry has most recently appeared in print or online in *Gertrude*, *The Attic Which is Desire*, *42 Opus*, *Buckle &*, *Oyster Boy Review*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. The political causes he is most passionate about change, unfortunately, with headlines and the swift current of current events, but lately he's been convinced that disarming, disabling, and otherwise limiting the number of nuclear bombs out there would be a good idea for everyone—many issues are trumped by the prospect of that awful and dazzling ka-boom.

The more recent of JO McDUGALL's five books of poetry are *Satisfied with Havoc* and *Dirt*, both from Autumn House Press. Among her awards are fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and the Arkansas Arts Council, a DeWitt Wallace/Reader's Digest award, an Academy of American Poets prize, and Arkansas's Porter Prize in Literature. An Arkansas native, she currently lives in Leawood, Kansas. Concerned with saving endangered animal species, she is distressed to think of a world without tigers.

CLAY MATTHEWS' work is published (or will be) in *Black Warrior Review*, *LIT*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *H_NGM_N*, *New Orleans Review*, *Forklift*, *Ohio*, and elsewhere. His chapbook *Muffler* is out from *H_NGM_N B_ _KS*. Be like Willie Nelson and support Farm Aid: <http://www.farmaid.org>.

GAIL MAZUR writes: "I live in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Provincetown, Mass., and am Writer in Residence at Emerson College in Boston. My most recent book, *Zeppo's First Wife: New and Selected Poems* was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2005 and was a finalist for the L.A. Times Book Prize, The Paterson Prize, and is recipient of the Massachusetts Book Award in Poetry. I have been engaged in anti-war activities as long as I can remember and am also now particularly troubled by the insidious destruction of our civil liberties."

DEREK MONG is the 2006 Ruth and Jay C. Halls Poetry Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He holds an MFA from the University of Michigan. Last spring he was awarded the Jeffrey E. Smith Editors' Prize from the *Missouri Review*. Recent poems and translations can be found in *The Southern Review*, *Third Coast*, *The Southeast Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, and *Artful Dodge*. Although he believes "gerrymander" to have the finest etymology in the English language, its widespread practice has brought Congress to a screeching (and sniveling) standstill.

SHEILA E. MURPHY's most recent book publication is a collaborative text titled *Continuations*, from The University of Alberta Press. Murphy's home is in Phoenix, Arizona, where she co-founded and for twelve years jointly coordinated with Beverly Carver the Scottsdale Center for the Arts Poetry Series. Murphy believes passionately in universal health care.

IDRA NOVEY's *The Next Country* won the 2005 New York Chapbook Fellowship from the Poetry Society of America. Her translation of the work of Brazilian poet Paulo Henriques Britto received a PEN Translation Fund Award and is forthcoming from BOA Editions. Recent poems appear in *Ploughshares* and the poetry anthology *Third Rail* (Simon & Schuster, 2007). She teaches writing at Columbia University. She would like to see her country become a world leader in the building of windmills.

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE's most recent book is *You & Yours*, (BOA Editions, 2005). Political issue passionate about: Justice for Palestinian and Iraqi civilians. Also: Why are so many Americans abandoning the idea of Freedom of Speech? ("Afraid to speak out, might lose my job, etc.")

TOM ORANGE writes: "Aside from completing my dissertation for the University of Western Ontario on Clark Coolidge's early poetry (1962-1978), I am a Learning

Specialist in the Disability Support Services Office and a lecturer in Creative Writing at The George Washington University. Since Fall 2000 I have co-curated the monthly in your ear poetry series at the District of Columbia Arts Center and run the dcpoetry.com website. Other recent poems and essays have appeared in *Phoebe*, *The Gig* (Toronto), *The Poker*, and *Fascicle*. This piece may be considered a found poem, a conceptual poem, or an effort in documentary poetics. It presents Lexis-Nexis database search results for the phrase 'the war is unwinnable' in fifty major newspapers worldwide in chronological order from September 11, 2001 to the present (March 10, 2006). The search results have been lightly edited, mostly by replacing specific names with titles (i.e. 'the president' for Lyndon Bains Johnson and/or George W. Bush)."

EVE PACKER, bronx-born poet/performer, lives in downtown New York, has one son, and swims daily. Her most recent book is *playland: poems 1994-2004* (Fly By Night Press). She has also put out three poetry/jazz CDs. Her work has appeared in *Columbia Poetry Review*, and as part of Maine Winter Harbor Theater's production *Letters from Iraq*. "Political Cause Most Passionate About: thats a toughie: Can't bear the vulnerable getting hurt, wld go to the barricades (i think) for freedom of speech, loathe bullies, feel you must stand up . . . every time you cover, dont push back, someone down the line dies . . . on the other hand, like the woman in the new nails salon said, right after 9/11 . . . if only we were more kind. . . ."

ALAN MICHAEL PARKER is the author or editor of four poetry collections including *Jelly Jar Ode*, forthcoming from BOA Editions, in 2008; a novel, *Cry Uncle*, and the recently published anthology, *The Imaginary Poets*. He is an Associate Professor of English at Davidson College, where he directs the creative writing program, and a core faculty member of the Queens University low-residency MFA program. "I am passionate about the work done by City Kids, a nonprofit foundation in New York that attends to at-risk teens by offering after-school and weekend theater workshops and performances. The notion that Art can participate directly in social change, and more immediately in the lives of kids, stands as a powerful testament to the values I consider greater than us all. <http://www.citykids.com/main.html>."

NATE PRITTS's new work can be/will be seen in print from *The Southern Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Conduit* and *Greensboro Review*, and online at *DIAGRAM* and *Bedazzler*. *Winter Constellations*, a chapbook from horseless press, was released in late 2005; a new chapbook, *Big Crisis*, is due out from Forklift, Ink in 2006. The editor and sole shareholder of *H_NGM_N*, an online journal of poetry, poetics, etc., Nate lives in Natchitoches, Louisiana, where he is an Assistant Professor at Northwestern State University. "Education reforms and issues are the most important to me."

ALICIA RABINS lives in Brooklyn, New York. She has been published in the *Boston Review*, *6x6* and *New York Nights*, and has a poem forthcoming in the NYU Press anthology *Broken Land: New Poems from Brooklyn*. Politically speaking, action in the service of human dignity and social justice—whether in New York City, Latin America or the Middle East—is her primary imperative, with a particular interest in education and dialogue.

KATHRYN REGINA works as a writer and editor in Chicago. Her interests include idioglossia and foreign accent syndrome, and she believes in the possibilities of a hydrogen economy.

MICHAEL RERICK lives in Cincinnati, working hard on PhD studies. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Bathhouse*, *Caketrain*, *Cue*, *Coconut*, *Diagram*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *Fence*, *Nidus*, *No Tell Motel*, *Order+Decorum*, *Shampoo*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, *Word For/Word*, and *Words on Walls*. Political Concern: "Antarctica, land of ice (of 14 million sq km, 13.72 million sq km ice-covered), which holds the majority of the world's fresh water, is shrinking, losing its ice-water. So, loss of fresh water; but also an addition to the world's oceans. Good-by Hawaii? Seems a gauge (via global warming) measuring humanity, mirroring it. An oddity: Antarctica belongs to no government. The biggest problems belong to no one, it seems. And Taoists believe they control the weather as much as the weather controls them."

SUSAN RICH is the author of *Cures Include Travel*, recently released by White Pine Press. Her book *The Cartographer's Tongue: Poems of the World* won the PEN USA Award for Poetry and the Peace Corps Writers Award for Best Poetry Book. She has been the recipient of an Artist Trust Award and a Fulbright Fellowship. Her poems have recently appeared or will be appearing in the *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *North American Review*, *Seattle Review*, and *Quarterly West*. "Most Americans don't know that the largest embassy in the world today is the United States Embassy in Baghdad. Completely decked out with cinema, fast food chains, and what will be Iraq's largest swimming pool, it looks like we are hunkering down to stay at least into the next century. I hope, perhaps futilely, for a future where Americans turn against our government's policies in Iraq and instead author the social change we so desperately need. How else can we as citizens of this nation claim any moral or ethical life? How do we sit at our computers and write poetry when it's our taxes that pay for the AK 47s and fighter jets?"

MICHAEL ROBINS is the author of *The Next Settlement*, which was selected for the Vassar Miller Prize and will be published by University of North Texas Press in April. His poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Boston Review*, *Meridian*, *National Poetry Review*, *Third Coast*, and elsewhere. He lives in Chicago. "The political cause that I am most passionate about is Senate Resolution 71, Relative to the Congressional Accountability Act, which was passed on April 15, 1997, and allowed Beau, a yellow Labrador and guide dog (not to be confused with the "Beau" so tenderly eulogized in *Jimmy Stewart and His Poems*), to become the first dog given permission to walk on the floor of the United States Senate."

ANTHONY ROBINSON lives and works in Eugene, Oregon. His chapbook *Bright Weather & I Guess a Sort of Vision* was published by Pilot Books in 2006. He is the co-author (with Andrew Mister) of *Here's to You*, and in his spare time edits *The Canary*. Political cause: "I don't consider myself a very political person, though identity politics irks me and war makes me sad."

ANDREW SAGE lives in New York City. Recent work has appeared in journals including *Natural Bridge*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Salt Hill*, *the tiny*, and *Vanitas*. A favorite political cause: topnotch public education for underprivileged students.

JEROME SALA's latest book is *Look Slimmer Instantly* from Soft Skull Press. Other books include cult classics such as *Spaz Attack*, *I Am Not a Juvenile Delinquent*, and *Raw Deal*. He lives in New York City, works in advertising, and is writing a dissertation for a PhD at New York University in his spare time. His political obsession is with how ideology takes over our brains in the form of common sense.

LARRY SAWYER sells unreal estate on the Internet (www.milkmag.org). Recent work appears in *Van Gogh's Ear*, *the tiny*, *Coconut*, and elsewhere. He also curates the Myopic Poetry Series at Myopic Books in Wicker Park. He is most passionate about educating the public about the devastating effects of greenhouse gas emissions on our environment. He calls Chicago home.

ELIZABETH SAVAGE teaches English at Fairmont State University where she also serves as a poetry editor for *Kestrel*. Her essay "Reading How We Read Gender in Nineteenth-Century Poetry" was recently published in a collection from the MLA. Organizing higher education in West Virginia is her primary political commitment—to build a strong union that brings genuine equity to adjunct instructors and classified staff as well as to faculty directly serving students.

AARON SMITH is the author of *Blue on Blue Ground* (Pittsburgh, 2005), winner of the Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize and a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award. His chapbook *What's Required* (Thorngate Road, 2003) received the Frank O'Hara Prize. He is a poetry editor for *Bloom*. Political cause: "I'm disheartened by the ongoing organized hatred of gay people."

MAGGIE SMITH still lives in her hometown of Columbus, Ohio. She is the author of *Lamp of the Body* and *Nesting Dolls*, and new poems are forthcoming in *Gulf Coast* and *Quarterly West*. As for a political cause, she feels passionately about freedom of choice.

JUDITH TAYLOR's two collections of poetry are *Curios* (Sarabande Press, 2000) and *Selected Dreams from the Animal Kingdom* (Zoo Press, 2003). Recent work can be found in *Volt*, *The Antioch Review*, and *Pleiades*. She lives in Los Angeles and co-edits *POOL*. "In the 60s and 70s I hoped for revolutionary change. I was (and am) anti-war, socialist, and feminist. My desire for social justice and peace hasn't abated, yet I'm far more cynical, even despairing, about the possibility for positive change at this time. I'm sickened by everything the Bush regime does (or doesn't do), the backward trends it promulgates domestically and internationally. The cause I'm most passionate about now? Simply (and I wish the task was simple) to see the Republican ideologues dethroned. Nothing progressive or even sensible will happen until that occurs.

DAWN TEFFT holds an MA in English and is currently working on a PhD in Creative Writing at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research papers for the past year have all focused on globalism in some manner. She is particularly concerned about a global economy in which neo-liberal economics increasingly consolidates resources under the control of a trans-national corporate elite. On a smaller level, she is, as always, concerned about her own financially embattled family. Her e-chapbook *Field Trip to My Mother and Other Exotic Locations* was published in Mudlark in 2005. Other recent publications include poems in

LitRag, Redivider, Rhino, Ugly Accent and *Wicked Alice*, and a poem forthcoming in *Alimentum: The Literature of Food*.

MAJA TEREFF lives in Chicago, and has been teaching ESL for over ten years. She has received her MA in Applied Linguistics from UIC. Her co-translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *New American Writing*, *Black Clock*, *Action Yes*, and *6x6*. She grew up in the former Yugoslavia during the stifling communist regime of Josip Broz Tito whose authoritarian rule, fraught with platitudes such as "Brotherhood and Unity," ended with his death in 1980. During Maja's college years at Belgrade University, she worked as a translator and newscaster in the English Department at Radio Yugoslavia under the regime of a much more vile entity, the spawn of the mafia, war, and communism called Slobodan Milošević. Since 9/11, life seems to have become reminiscent of the political life in her native country as is evident from the recent bombardment of slogans, warmongering, and appeals to patriotism.

STEVEN TEREFF lives in Chicago, where he teaches English Composition at Columbia College Chicago. His poems and co-translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *New American Writing*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Black Clock*, *Action Yes*, and *6x6*. In translating Tadić, Steven feels that he has found his political voice. He is struck by the similarities between Tadić's horrific accounts of life under Communism and current life in the U.S.

CATHERINE THEIS lives in Iowa City, Chicago, and Tempe, Arizona. Her poems can be found in *Fence*, *GutCult*, *Make Magazine*, *Northwest Review*, and *Mrs. Maybe*. She is the author of the chapbook *The Maybook*, published by Your Beeswax Press, and collaborated on the chapbook *In Fortune* for *Dusie's* publishing collective. Political passions: Volunteer! Volunteer! Catherine is a good citizen, not a nihilist. One way she expresses her political convictions is through weekly volunteer work, where she distributes food items collected from local groceries and restaurants to shelters and other not-for-profit, volunteer organizations. Volunteer work benefits everyone: Do it once a week for the rest of your life and something magical might happen to your community and the skies above.

SUSAN TICHY's third book, *Bone Pagoda*, poems on Vietnam, is forthcoming from Ahsahta Press in January 2007. Other recent poems have appeared in *42opus*, *Agni*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *CutBank*, and *Denver Quarterly*. She lives in Colorado and in Virginia, where she teaches in the Graduate Writing Program at George Mason University. She also serves as poetry editor of *Practice: New Writing + Art*. "The degree to which our society is organized to produce war: that is dead seed at the heart of it all. An anti-war activist in the Vietnam era and the widow of a combat veteran, I am now /still/ again an antiwar activist and an associate member of Veterans for Peace, an organization of Iraq War veterans."

SUSIE TIMMONS left Chicago to move back in with her parents in Brooklyn, New York. She dreams about Chicago a lot and always will. "SAFE" is not the feeling that comes to mind when, as a citizen, she considers her government.

NICK TWEMLOW lives in Chicago with his wife and cat. He is co-editor, along with Joshua Edwards and Anthony Robinson, of *The Canary*. Some poems have

lately appeared or are forthcoming in *Boston Review*, *VOLT*, and *Forklift, Ohio*. "I have been turning over a line in my head from the 'Sayings of Ptahotep,' found in Guy Davenport's essay 'From the Chrysanthemum Notebook,' published in a 1959 issue of *Gadfly*: 'Teach the rich to be of use.'"

KATE UMANS lives and teaches in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her other poems are forthcoming in *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *32 Poems*, and *Forklift, Ohio*. She is passionate about a number of political issues, but would most like to see a country in which we replace dogma with empathy and knowledge.

LEE UPTON's fifth book of poems, *Undid in the Land of Undone*, is forthcoming in 2007 from New Issues Press. She is a Professor of English and the writer-in-residence at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Political causes: Raising the U.S. minimum wage, supporting freedom of expression, and environmental reform.

CAROLINE WALKER lives outside of Chicago. Poems have most recently appeared in *PRACTICE*. "Political causes—there are thousands—for the good, against the cruel, unjust, etc. We are a rich, overindulged lot. Last night, I took my newborn out for a stroll before dinner. I ran into an elegant 85-year-old lady who had emigrated from Hungary in 1956. She had lost her husband to the Nazis, narrowly escaped from a forced march, and raised her son alone. I returned home and took apart our broken garbage disposal, which had grown quite rank. It seems the writer's job is to seek out stories that will force us to pause in our fancy lives and want to give more."

VALERIE MARTT WALLACE is Administrative Director of The Chicago Center for Urban Life & Culture. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and won a scholarship from the Southampton Writers' Workshop and a fellowship from Ox-Bow. She's been published in several literary journals, has been an annual judge for the Chicago Children's Haiku Festival, and in 2006 received an Illinois Arts Council Literary Award. "I am most passionate about what the poet Sterling Plump calls 'the tragedy of race.'"

MIKE WHITE is originally from Montreal but currently lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. His poems have appeared recently or are forthcoming in *Colorado Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Journal*, *Verse*, and *Poetry*. He serves as co-editor at *Quarterly West*. Environmental causes keep him up at night. He will walk down dark alleys to find a recycling bin.

JENNIFER WILLOUGHBY lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her work has recently appeared in *Shampoo Poetry* and *Shade 2006*. Political causes: Humane treatment of all animals and mass eradication of cell phones.

JOSHUA MARIE WILKINSON lives in Denver, Colorado, and is the author of two book-length poems, most recently *Lug Your Careless Body out of the Careful Dusk* (Iowa, 2006). A film about the band Califone is due out in 2007 with Thrill Jockey Records, and he supports Arts Corps in his home town of Seattle which is a non-profit program that brings free arts classes to low-income youth. More info can be found at www.artscorps.org

TERENCE WINCH's most recent book is *That Special Place: New World Irish Stories* (Hanging Loose, 2004). His previous book of poems was *The Drift of Things* (2001). His work has appeared in three *Best American Poetry* collections, in the new *Oxford Book of American Poetry*, as well as in *Verse*, *The Paris Review*, *New American Writing*, *The New Republic*, and elsewhere. "These days, I think too much about the destructive certitudes of religious belief."

Call for Submissions

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2008

Dossier: Sylvia Plath

Each issue of *Court Green* features a dossier on a special topic or theme. For our fifth issue, we are seeking creative responses to the work, life, and legacy of Sylvia Plath. It has been over forty years since Plath committed suicide. In the decades since, her influence has proven to be great and lasting. For this dossier, we would like to see fresh takes on and responses to Plath's life and work, however subtle or overt, in poetry and short lyric essays or prose. All styles are welcome. We are not looking for critical/academic works at this time.

Submissions of Sylvia Plath poetry for consideration in the dossier can be sent during our submission period March 1-June 30, 2007 to: Editors, *Court Green*, English Department, Columbia College Chicago, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. Email submissions are not accepted.

